

**Pakhtun Men's Perceptions of the Conditions Promoting
Domestic Violence in their Culture**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reflects on Pakhtun men's perceptions of the conditions promoting domestic violence against women in their culture. The existing literature on domestic violence in Pakistan, the primary focus of which is the women victims of such violence, shows some staggering and skewed statistics, owing to the deeply embedded patriarchal social structure, gender-prejudiced attitudes prevailing at every level of society as well as poverty, illiteracy, a strict pattern of gender-specific roles and spaces, socio-economic dependence of women on men supported by religion. However, men's views on this issue have rarely been addressed in Pakistan in general and Pakhtun society in particular. I examine how the social and cultural environment of Pakhtun society influences the construction of (violent) masculinity and gender-power relations. These create the potential for violence, specifically domestic violence against women. The research was carried out in four different locations of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Data was generated through semi-structured and in-depth interviews of 32 male respondents, eight in each of the selected areas, on the basis of three categories, i.e. ethnicity, age, and educational status of the respondents. Drawing upon my respondents' views I show that Pakhtunwali, the core of the Pakhtun social structure, is a key contributing factor offering potential for the construction of violent Pakhtun masculinity particularly through the notions of *badal* (revenge), *gherat* (self-honour or Pakhtun honour), and *nang* (Pakhtun pride). It also encourages a strict pattern of gender hierarchies and spatialization, which leaves women marginalized at all levels. Thus in Pakhtun society one learns to be aggressive in order to dominate and control, and one way this aggression is expressed is through violence against women. I argue that the joint family structure, the general perception of women's issues including domestic violence as a highly personal and private matter, the absence of an effective and competent criminal justice system, and lack of domestic violence laws provide the perpetrators with considerable impunity.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this study is based on my original research work. The following paper has been produced from this thesis.

‘The Spatialization of Inter-Personal Relations in the Familial Space in Pakhtun Culture’. Paper presented at the 10th ESA (European Sociological Association) conference, 7-10 September, Geneva, Switzerland.

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

This thesis investigates Pakhtun¹ men's perceptions of the conditions promoting domestic violence in their culture. Specifically, this study explores how the social and cultural dimensions of Pakhtun society contribute to a specific construction of (violent) masculinity, promote gender inequality, women's marginalization, and offer potential for the perpetration of violence, particularly domestic violence against women. The first thing to say here is that the term 'domestic violence' does not exist as such in Pakistani society. Rather, domestic violence is popularly known as 'family violence' or 'family conflicts' (*gahrelo tashadud* or *gahrelo jagre* and *korane zeist*, *nachaqe* or *rabre*—in Pakhto). The term 'family violence' references the social configuration in which domestic violence occurs rather than the space, the domus or home, as its parameters. This as I shall show in Chapter 4, is an important dimension of domestic violence in Pakistani and in Pakhtun culture as the family in its extended sense is the most important site for this culture.

Domestic violence (*gahrelo tashadud*) refers to a range of behaviours perpetrated by an intimate partner (husband) and other family members against women and girls both in the domestic and public spheres. This range of behaviours includes physical violence (e.g., slapping, beating, kicking, stabbing, strangling, burning, honour killing etc); psychological and emotional violence (such as abandonment,

¹ Different names such as Afghans, Pukhtuns or Pakhtuns, Pahstuns, and Pathans have been used for around 40 million semi-nomadic people inhabiting southern and eastern Afghanistan and in Pakistan, mainly in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Federally Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA), Karachi city, and western Baluchistan (Nawaz 2011). Similarly different terms such as Pashto, Pakhto and Pushto have been used for their language. For the purpose of this study I shall use Pakhtun as the adjective because my respondents in the field used the word in that way.

confinement to the home, surveillance, threats of divorce, destruction of property, verbal aggression, and abuse through customs such as swara², denial of marriage consent and inheritance, restriction of education and participation in family decision-making); financial violence (acts of denial of funds, strict accountability for every penny spent, denial of food and basic needs and controlling access to health care, and employment); and sexual violence (coercive sex through threats, intimidation or physical force and forcing unwanted sexual acts), (Fikree and Bhatti 1999: 195; Khan, 2000: 2; Pillai 2001: 966; Watts and Zimmerman 2002: 1233; Shaikh 2003: 23; Kimmel and Aronson 2004: 234; Women's Aid 2009: 2).

My motivation to embark on this study was based on the following: first, Pakhtun society has the highest ratio of domestic violence against women compared to other communities in Pakistan. For example, the Aurat Foundation³ in its annual report on *Violence Against Women in Pakistan* (2008), ranked the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province⁴ top of the list concerning the total reported cases of domestic violence against women, i.e. 35.31% against 20.9% in Punjab, 15.62% in Sindh, 0.9375% in Balochistan and 1.56% in Islamabad. The question arises, why are these figures of domestic violence so high despite the fact that the Pakhtuns of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa constitute only 13.18 % of the total population of Pakistan⁵? Through this thesis I shall seek to answer this question.

² Swara is a custom among the Pakhtuns called vanni in Punjabi, in which a woman is given to a hostile family as compensation in order to settle disputes regarding murder, land and any other loss to the hostile family. I shall explain this in Chapter 4: 184.

³ The Aurat Foundation Pakistan (see e.g. <http://www.af.org.pk/mainpage.htm>), established in 1986, is a civil society organization working for women's development and empowerment in Pakistan. It collects data on violence against women from all parts of Pakistan annually.

⁴ Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is the name given to the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan through the 18th Constitutional Amendment Act in April, 2010.

⁵ Population Welfare Department of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa report 2008, available at: <http://www.nwfp.gov.pk/population/Department/Demography.php>, accessed on June 12, 2009.

Second, domestic violence against women is, by and large, perpetrated by men (Ferguson et al. 2004: 17). This is also largely true in case of the Pakhtuns. In a study conducted in Karachi city, Fikree et al. (2005: 53) found that Pakhtuns are more likely than other ethnic groups to abuse their wives, i.e. Pakhtun 34.1% Punjabis 27.3%, Mohajir 23.3%, Sindhi 9.6%, others 5.7%. Since men's views on the issue of domestic violence is rarely addressed in Pakistan (Fikree et al. 2005), I therefore wanted to engage with men about their views of the different conditions that contribute to domestic violence.

Third, due to the dearth of reliable information and the sensitivity of this issue policy makers and researchers are reluctant to address this issue in much of the subcontinent (Koenig et al. 2003), including Pakistan and its Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (Niaz 2003; Khan and Hussain 2008). My study is important because of its focus on men's perceptions of the factors that contribute to domestic violence and should thus be of use to policy makers, researchers, and human rights activists in thinking about effective programmes to address this issue in Pakistan in general and Pakhtun society in particular.

Finally, I come from this area and therefore have significant background knowledge as well as personal and professional interest in the topic. I shall now turn to this.

My interest in undertaking this study

My interest to embark on this research is grounded in my life experience and professional interest, working as a lecturer of Sociology at the University of Malakand, Pakistan. I was born and brought up in a patriarchal joint family system

in the district Dir of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. My older uncle and his wife were the absolute authority of this joint family. My father and mother, being the youngest members of the family, had little opportunity to participate actively in family matters and decision-making processes. My parents used to accept and enact whatever my older uncle decided for them. It was impossible for my parents, especially for my mother, to challenge my uncle's authority, and even a slight violation in this regard was considered a breach of respect for elders, and more seriously a threat to the unity of joint living. In case of any internal family conflict and disagreement between my mother and other senior (female) family members, my father—even if he was aware of my mother's innocence—would not support my mother, and, even more sadly, often would not hesitate to use violence against my mother if she failed to submit, and kept on arguing. Using violence under such conditions proved him to be a *gherate*⁶ (virile, honourable and real) Pakhtun. In such a situation what could my poor and dependent mother do but to endure? This type of gendered hierarchy, where (senior) men enjoy absolute authority is the norm in the area I discuss.

The women members of a family must respect their men and must bow to their authority and decisions under all circumstances. Any kind of (supposed) disobedience on their part is unacceptable and can lead to abuse and violence, both verbal and physical. The women face abuse, even on trivial issues, and often complaints from the in-laws are very effective in provoking domestic violence. Sometimes, while committing domestic violence against women, it is argued that a

⁶ Gherat in Pakhto means honour, self-esteem or the self-respect of a person. To be a *gherate* generally refers to how a Pakhtun upholds and stands by the values of the Pakhtunwali. From a gender or violence against women perspective it is often strongly correlated with male control and influence over females (Rabia 2001).

woman who is rude and disrespectful is treated in the same way in return. Violence is thus considered the appropriate way to make a (defiant) woman docile and subjugated. Women become familiar with and accept this pattern of behaviour because they have no way out. Moreover, domestic violence against women is generally not taken seriously but considered a normal aspect of matrimonial relationships. In my experience this is the situation of almost every woman and every family in the village where I live, for example.

Ironically enough, quite often the dissolution of the joint family, may be because of its large size or intra-familial conflict, leads to serious family conflicts and strife among the cousins called *tarboorwali* regarding the uneven division of property. Here women are often blamed for cultivating hatred among brothers and held responsible for provoking the division of the family. This I also experienced during the disintegration of our joint family. Furthermore, I saw the disparity in property division, litigation, a culture of backbiting and suspicion, and rivalry among my uncles. Here too, as I shall discuss in detail in chapter 4, women are often used through exchange marriages (*badal*) to heal the damage, which is frequently unsuccessful and can worsen the life of the women.

In Pakhtun culture a man is expected to put his natal family first. If he does not, he is often the object of taunts as a *begherat* (coward or Pakhtunless) and is called *da khaze mazdoor* (hen-packed husband). When I graduated and was appointed as a lecturer in a public sector university, I decided to shift my family to university accommodation, but, at the start, found it very hard to break away and separate my house from my parents and brothers. I tried to convince my parents and relatives who were against this move, but the cultural mores were so engraved in their minds that they adhered to them and considered my act as defiance. As a sociologist and

working in an academic environment I persistently see this patriarchal control and lack of individual freedom as one of the most critical issues in Pakhtun society.

After getting funding for my higher education from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, I became interested in investigating why Pakhtun society is so rigid, conservative, male dominated, violent, and oppressive to women. Why is it that Pakhtuns being Muslims, a religion that emphasizes gender equality, peace, individual freedom, mutual respect, and supposedly gives women equal rights in all aspects of social life nonetheless act in contravention to all this? Through this study I attempt to provide answers to these questions.

In the following sections of this chapter I shall first provide an overview of the magnitude of domestic violence in the global and south Asian context and shall discuss it with a specific focus on Pakistan and Pakhtun society. I shall then discuss men (masculinity) and violence as well as focus on possible theoretical explanations of men's violence against women. Further, I shall outline how men's perpetration of domestic violence against women has been addressed. In the final section I shall outline the structure of this thesis.

Domestic violence against women in the South Asian context

Domestic violence against women is a primary concern among a growing community of researchers, human rights activists, national and international women's movements, and policy makers, and an international consensus in the form of CEDAW and Beijing conferences has developed to deal with it (Heise 1998: 262; Khan 2000: 1; Koenig et al. 2003: 269; Ferguson et al. 2004: 17). Domestic violence

is a global epidemic which occurs in all cultures and in all groups, though its intensity varies from country to country, from urban to rural areas, and differs in different socio-economic groups, ethnic groups and according to age structure (Khan 2000; Krug et al. 2002; Summers and Hoffman 2002; Watts and Zimmerman 2002). Worldwide it is estimated that at least one in every three women will be beaten, sexually assaulted, harassed, or abused in her lifetime (Shaikh 2003: 23; United Nations Development Fund for Women 2003). A population-based survey of 48 different countries estimates that 10 to 69% of women reported having faced physical assault at some point in their lives from their current or ex-partner (World Health Organization 2002: chapter 4). According to Women's Aid (2009) at least two women per week are killed by a male partner or ex-partner in the UK. A study of the World Health Organization notes that annually 22% of women in the age range of 16-44 years in the United States and 30% in the United Kingdom are abused by their current partner or ex-partner (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). Violence causes more deaths and disability among women (more than 70 percent) than war, accidents, cancer, and other calamities (Krug et al. 2002). Domestic violence tends to be under-reported, because it is still, by and large, considered a private matter in many societies, particularly in the South Asian cultures, including the Pakhtun society of Pakistan.

However, in developed countries, particularly in the west, domestic violence was lifted out of its relative obscurity in the 1960s and is now extensively discussed. Its impact has been researched in academic circles and the media (Pillai 2001: 965). But in developing societies, South Asia in particular, the population based evidence on the magnitude of domestic violence, its precipitating factors, its cost, and its impacts on women, households, the community, and at national level remain sketchy

(Koenig et al 2003: 269). Nonetheless, some studies report a very dismal situation. For example, a study by the World Health Organization (2005) notes that 50 to 70 (or more) per cent of women in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Tanzania are subjected to physical and sexual violence by intimate partners. In India it is estimated that at least 22 women are killed every day due to domestic issues, including dowry disputes (Shabir 2012). Similarly in South Africa a woman is killed every six hours (ibid). Research studies reveal that the widespread occurrence of domestic violence in these cultures is often attributed to economic deprivation and poverty, illiteracy and low levels of education, lack of legislation and insufficient protection by the laws of women, patriarchal and gendered-biased attitudes, the impunity of male perpetrators of such violence, and the low socio-economic status of women (Khan 2000: 1; Pillai 2001: 956; Niaz 2003: 173; Rabbani et al. 2008: 416). Furthermore, research studies document that domestic violence against women in these societies has long been considered both socially and religiously a legal and accepted act, conceived as a highly personal and private aspect of family life, and in many cases, an institutionalized practice, condoned by the state machinery (Koenig et al. 2003), owing to the prevailing patriarchal structure in these cultures (Niaz 2003; Khan and Hussain 2008).

Andersson et al. (2010: 1966) argue that ‘violence against women flourishes in a climate where the majority of survivors remain silent about it’. In this regard research reports suggest that under-reporting of domestic abuse and violence is more of a problem in less developed than in developed countries (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Naved et al. 2006; Ellsberg et al. 2008). Studies have highlighted different reasons for the under-reporting of domestic abuse in South Asian cultures such as the lack of legal and institutional support, the gender-prejudiced criminal justice

system, fear of damaging the family honour, fear of worsening the abuse instead of redress, fear of losing children and support of the family, and fear of stigmatization in the community (Pillai 2001; Koenig et al. 2003; Naved et al. 2006; Khan and Hussain 2008; Andersson et al. 2010; Perveen 2010a). Pillai (2001: 965) argues that ‘domestic violence still tends to be a “crime of silence” and considered socially accepted and a normalized act in married life in the majority of the Asian communities’. This is in many ways the situation in Pakistan to which now I turn.

Violence against women in Pakistan

Research studies document a bleak picture of women in Pakistan with staggering statistics of violence against women. For example, a recent study of TrustLaw (2011)⁷ on the *World’s Most Dangerous Countries for Women*, ranked Pakistan third on the list, based on the fact that women in Pakistan earn 82 percent less than men and because of the prevailing harmful cultural, tribal, and religious traditions jeopardising women’s lives. The latter include their lack of access to resources and redress, acid attacks, child and forced marriages and punishment, retribution by stoning, and other physical abuse and injuries to women, entailing mutilation and killing in the name of honour. In his Human Rights Watch report *Crime or Custom? Violence Against Women in Pakistan* Burney (1999: 34) estimates that domestic violence in Pakistan ranges from 70% to more than 90%, and in the majority of cases the perpetrators are men—husbands or close relatives. Similarly, Ali and Bustamante-Gavino (2007: 1417) in a study conducted in Pakistan found that the prevalence of verbal abuse was 97.5 % by the husband and 97.0% by the in-laws,

⁷ See <http://www.trust.org/trustlaw/news/factsheet-the-worlds-most-dangerous-countries-for-women>, accessed on January 5, 2012.

while the prevalence of physical abuse was 80.0% by the husband and 57.5% by the in-laws. In an earlier study Shaikh (2000: 312) highlighted that 78% of male respondents admitted to having been involved in the sexual abuse of their wives.

Research studies report that it is very difficult to estimate the exact figures for violence against women in Pakistan because the majority of the cases are not reported due to multiple factors including perceptions of shame and honour (Burney 1999; Khan and Hussain 2008). Table 1 indicates the Aurat Foundation of Pakistan's findings regarding reported cases of violence against women.

Table 1. Number and percentages of reported cases of violence against women in Pakistan, 2008 to 2010.

Categories of Crime	Number of Cases of violence against women (VAW) in Pakistan during 2008 to 2010.						Percentage increase/decrease in VAW cases between 2008-2009	Percentage increase/decrease in VAW cases between 2009-2010
	Year 2008	%	Year 2009	%	Year 2010	%		
Domestic Violence	281	3.71	608	7.11	486	6.075	116.37%	-20.06%
Acid Throwing	29	0.38	53	0.62	32	0.4	82.75%	-39.62%
Sexual Assault	172	2.27	274	3.21	74	0.92	59.30%	-72.00%
Honour Killing	475	6.27	604	7.06	557	6.96	27.15%	-7.78%
Rape/Gang Rape	778	10.2	928	10.86	928	11.6	19.28%	0.00%
Suicide	599	7.91	683	7.99	633	7.91	14.02%	-7.32%
Abduction/Kidnapping	1784	23.56	1987	23.25	2236	27.96	11.38%	12.13%
Murder	1422	18.78	1384	16.19	1436	17.95	-2.67%	-39.62%
Burning	61	0.80	50	0.58	38	0.475	-18.03%	-24.00%
Miscellaneous	1970	26.02	1977	23.13	1580	19.75	0.35%	-20.08%
Total	7571		8548		8000		13%	-6.41%

Source: Aurat Foundation Annual Report 2009 and 2010.

Table 1⁸ shows an increase of 13% in violence against women from 2008 to 2009, with domestic violence being the most increased category of violence (116.39%) followed by acid throwing (82.75%), sexual assault (59.30%), honour killing (27%),

⁸ The figures are organized on the basis of the increased/decreased percentage of the violent incidents against women in 2008-9. The mentioned facts and figures are those which were reported in the media and show a skewed ratio compared to the more than 19 million population, i.e. significantly under-reporting.

rape/gang rape (19.28%), suicide (14.02%), abduction/kidnapping (11.38%) and miscellaneous (0.35%). Murder and burning cases show a decrease of 2.67% and 18.03% respectively during 2008 to 2009. In 2009-10, overall violence against women in Pakistan decreased by 6.41%. Except for the cases of abduction/kidnapping and murder which increased by 12.13% and 3.76% respectively, the other categories depict a declining trend, the highest being sexual assault, i.e. 72% followed by acid throwing cases with a decline of 39.62%, while domestic violence shows a fall of 20 percent.

The question arises, does this decline indicate a change in attitudes or extreme under-reporting? One possible answer is that in the years 2009 and 2010 Pakistan was intensively engulfed by militancy issues and also experienced two major calamities of floods affecting all provinces. This caused the administration, police, media, and other civil agencies to focus on the victims of flooding, paying less attention to women victims of violence (Perveen 2010a: 16). Further, the striking increase in the cases of abduction and murder during the post-flood aggravated situation (2009 and 2010) is interpreted as indicating that ‘the unfortunate victims fell prey mostly to the prostitution and human trafficking mafia’ (ibid). The category of ‘miscellaneous’ violence includes cases of *swara*, custodial violence, torture, trafficking, child marriages, incest, threats of violence, sexual harassment, and attempted murder (ibid).

Women face violence in every third household of Pakistan in lower, middle and upper class families and in most cases the Jirga or Panchaiyat⁹, religious and political influentials, come forward to help the perpetrators and suppress the case of

⁹ The Jirga, also called the Panchaiyat, is a council of male elders which resolves disputes of different kinds.

violence against women (Saadia Qamar 2008). Due to their seclusion through the purdah system and the conservative attitudes of the people, women in this society lack education, authority, employment, and access to public resources and agencies of redress. It is possibly for these reasons that women are often ignorant of the fact that violence against them is a crime or it is rationalized/normalized through the cultural and religious notions of *gherat* [honour], *sabar* [patience and endurance] and *qismat* [fate] (Siddiqi 1991; Haj-Yahia 1998b; Khan 2000; Khan and Hussain 2008). Thus one might argue that males in Pakistani society benefit from the local social, cultural, political, religious, economic and judicial systems while females are deprived of their rights and vulnerable to domestic violence. The situation in the Pakhtun society of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is even worse than the rest of the provinces of Pakistan. This, as I shall discuss in this thesis, is because of the particular conventions and traditions called the Pakhtun code of honour or 'Pakhtunwali' (see e.g. Caroe 1958; Spain 1963; Ahmed 1980; Glatzer 1998; Kakar 2004; Shaheen 2004; Strickland 2006; Khattak et al. 2009).

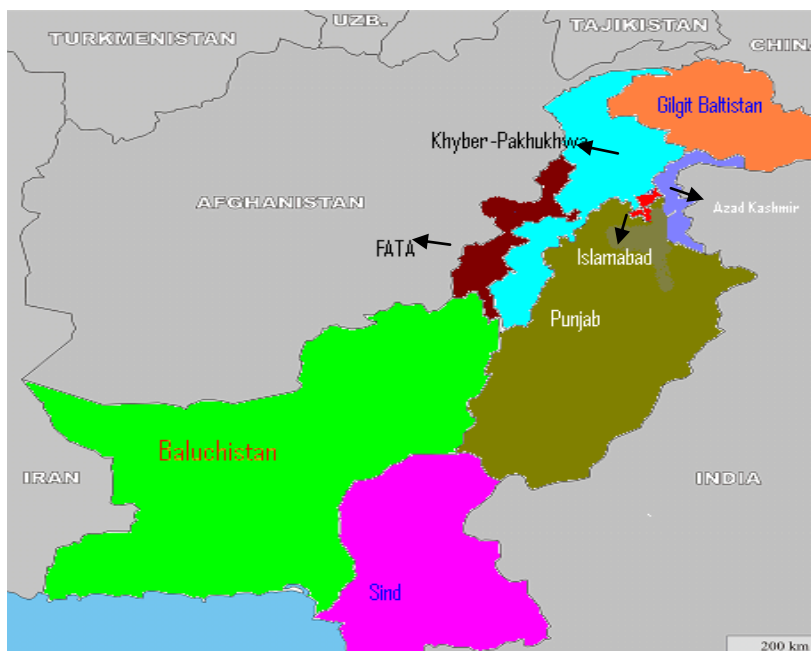
Violence against women in Pakhtun society: victim profile

I think before highlighting the reported incidents of violence against women in Pakhtun society, it is important to provide some demographic information about the Pakhtun society of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, which shall be used to critically analyse the reported incidents of violence against women. The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan is the smallest of its four provinces¹⁰. It borders on Afghanistan

¹⁰ Most of the information regarding geography has been taken from the official website of the government of NWFP <http://nwfp.gov.pk/AboutUs/index.php>, accessed on July 3, 2009.

to the northwest, Gilgit Baltistan to the northeast, Azad Kashmir to the east, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA— home to orthodox Pakhtuns) to the west and south, Punjab and Islamabad to the southeast as shown in Figure 1. The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has an area of 28,773 square miles or 74,521 km² of Pakistani territory and its capital is Peshawar. It consists of 24 districts and 7 administrative divisions.

Figure 1. Map of Pakistan and its provinces.



Source: <http://d-maps.com/m/pakistan/pakistan33.gif>, accessed on January 11, 2012 (adapted by the author).

The famous Khyber Pass links the province to Afghanistan. The region varies from dry rocky areas in the south to forests and green plains in the north. The climate can be extreme with intensely hot summers and freezing cold winters. Despite these extremes in weather, agriculture remains important in the area. According to the

Population Welfare Department¹¹ Report 2008, the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province is home to 13.18% of the total population of Pakistan. The total population of the province is 19.63 million of whom 52% are male and 48% are females. 83.12% of the total population lives in rural areas with a population density of 238.1 per km². The population growth rate is 2.19 and the total fertility rate of the province is 4.35. 48% of women have more than 5 births. The literacy ratio (10+) of the province is 35.41%. The male literacy ratio is 51.39 while the female literacy ratio is 18.82. 41% of the population live below poverty line, and more than 98% women are poor. Agriculture is the main source of income while the other means of subsistence include business, government and industrial employment and working abroad. The overall employment rate for civilian labour in the province is estimated at 34.08%, which is 29.91% for men and only 4.17% for women¹².

The largest ethnic group are the Pakhtuns who form about two-thirds of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa population. The non-Pakhtun tribes include the Awan, Chitrali, Kohistani, Gujjar and Hazara Swati. In addition, Afghan refugees, predominantly Pakhtuns (including the Ghalizai and Durrani tribes), and hundreds of thousands of Persian-speaking Tajiks and Hazaras as well as other smaller groups can be found throughout the province. Bilingualism and trilingualism is common, with Pashto and Urdu being the primary other languages spoken. Nearly all of the population are Muslim with a Sunni majority and significant minorities of the Shia and Ismaili sects.

¹¹ The information has been taken from the official website of the government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa available at: <http://www.nwfp.gov.pk/population/Department/Demography.php>, accessed on June 12, 2009.

¹² This data is based on publications of the federal and provincial Bureaus of Statistics of Pakistan, 2003.

Violence against women prevails in all forms in Pakhtun society of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. An overview of the different reported cases of violence against women in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in the year 2010 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Number and percentage of reported cases of violence against women in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province during 2010.

Category of crime	Total Number of Cases	% of the Total
Murder	328	50.46%
Domestic violence	89	13.69%
Abduction/ Kidnapping	77	11.85%
Suicide	54	8.30%
Honour killing	22	3.38%
Rape/ Gang rape	5	0.76%
Stove burning	3	0.46%
Acid throwing	1	0.15%
Miscellaneous	71	10.92%
Total/out of total population	650/19600000= 3.36	100% (.0033% of the total population)

Source: Aurat Foundation (2010: 43-48).

Like Table 1, the data regarding the total reported cases against women in Pakhtun society is very minimal compare to the total population of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The reason for this, as I shall discuss below, is that domestic violence is considered a highly private and sensitive issue and therefore under-reported.

The highest number of crimes against women in the province was murder (328 cases) which constitutes more than half (50.46 %) of all reported incidents of violence in 2010. This higher rate of women's murder is a clear manifestation of women's vulnerable situation in this society (Perveen 2010a). Murder in the majority of cases involved the killing of women in the name of honour, a consequence of the religious militancy in this area, and other (domestic and ethnic) conflicts (Perveen 2009, 2010a). Domestic violence against women showed a high

rate, i.e. 89 cases (13.69%) in the year 2010. The reported cases of women's abduction and kidnapping were 77, adding up to 11.85% of total incidents of violence against women cases in 2010. As woman in Pakhtun society observe strict purdah and rarely venture outside the house, compared to other societies, these events are relatively higher. These figures must be seen in the context of the unstable and conflict-ridden environment of this province as well as the massive displacement of people as a result of flooding and military operations in some of the areas of the province during 2010 (Perveen 2010a). Women's suicide incidents also showed an increase in 2010, i.e. 54 cases as compared to 43 cases in 2009. When women experience extreme torment and find no way out due to lack of state and community support they often resort to suicide (Campbell 2002; Haqqi 2008). The various conflicts among the ethnic groups, and the traditional notions of *gherat* (honour) contributed to a higher occurrence of honour killings, i.e. 22 cases in the province.

The aforementioned facts and figures of violence against women, domestic violence in particular, in Pakistan and in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, seem to be unrealistic not least because the estimated population of Pakistan in 2010 is 173.9534 million, while the population of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province is 19.63 million. Regarding domestic violence against women the Human Rights Watch report by Burney (1999) argues that about 50 to more than 90 percent of women experience domestic violence in Pakistan which is very high compared to, for example, 6-10% in Europe in a given year (Council of Europe 2002). Similarly, in the UK, for example, Walby and Allen (2004) estimated that 45% of women and 26% of men had experienced at least one incident of domestic violence in their life time. Further, they argue that 13 million incidents of physical violence or threats of

violence against women from partners or ex-partners happen in any one year. But if we look at the Aurat Foundation's report (2010) the total reported cases of domestic violence against women in Pakistan are only 486 and 89 for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa respectively. Indeed, the Aurat Foundation reports show no single reported case of domestic violence from the district Dir Upper (my native area) of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa for the years 2008 to 2010. However, according to my observation more than a hundred events of domestic violence of a severe nature including honour killings against women happen every year in the district Dir Upper alone. Further, based on my personal experience no home is immune from domestic violence and almost 100% of women experience domestic violence in some form. This highlights the enormous gap in this society between the occurrences of domestic violence and its reporting. Based on this, I would argue that the more conservative a region is, the less likely it is that reporting of domestic violence will occur. My assumption is that every man in Pakhtun society is a potential perpetrator of domestic violence against women and almost all women are vulnerable to such violence but the issue is to understand more clearly, from a male perspective, what the contributing factors to this situation are. The main aim of this study therefore is to understand Pakhtun men's perceptions of the conditions promoting domestic violence against women in their culture.

Background of the study

In this section I highlight how the social and cultural structure of Pakhtun society contributes to the construction of gender and sexuality, gender inequality and

gender-specific roles and spaces, marginalizes and privileges, and encourages the perpetration of domestic violence.

The social structure of Pakhtun society is marked by male dominance, based on the Pakhtunwali code (Weiss 1995; Kamal 1999; Ahmed 2006). The Pakhtunwali governs all activities and is practised in some form by every member of the Pakhtun community around the world (Caroe 1958; Spain 1963; Barth 1969; Ahmed 1980; Lindholm 1980; Tariq 1995; Yousufzai and Gohar 2005; Strickland 2006). To make sense of the issue of domestic violence against women in Pakhtun society I think it is important to critically highlight those aspects of the Pakhtunwali¹³ which contribute to promoting male dominance. These are:

Badal (vendetta or revenge): Sensitivity to insult is a core trait of Pakhtuns and requires revenge. In this regard a murder is likely to lead to murder in Pakhtunwali. *Badal* and blood feuds generally emanate from issues around women¹⁴, murder of one of the family members, personal injury, insult or damage to property. Any insult is generally resented and retaliation is exacted in such cases. Otherwise a Pakhtun receives ‘*peghor*’ (taunts, reproaches) from others and earns the name of ‘*begherat*’ (coward) in his community, a stigma considered a severe threat to Pakhtun hegemonic masculinity. In the majority of *badal* cases women are used as compensation to settle such disputes. Under such conditions the woman has a very low and degraded status among the in-laws in the family.

¹³ See the following web links on Pakhtunwali: <http://www.khyber.org>, <http://pukhtan.com> and <http://www.Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.gov.pk>, accessed on January 16, 2012.

¹⁴ Such issues include illicit relationships with women or rejecting the proposal for a woman or any disrespect to women.

Jirga (council or assembly of elders): This is the traditional informal judicial system of the Pakhtuns. It is composed only of the male elders of the Pakhtun tribes. The Jirga resolves disputes, maintains social order, and takes important decisions at every level ranging from the family to Pakhtun society at large. The people of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa due to weak state governance and the expensive and prolonged procedure of the courts, resort to the Jirga judicial system for speedy decisions. Usually the Jirga system works according to Pakhtun traditions and always strives for reconciliation among the parties. Women are not consulted when decisions are made regarding their fate. This restriction on women's representation hampers their empowerment and development in Pakhtun society. In the case of domestic violence the (family) Jirga usually gets the parties to agree on certain compromises, which can further aggravate the status of women.

Tor (Black or stigma): Tor means black and is also used to designate actions thought shameful or stigmatizing. Pakhtuns are very sensitive about the honour of their women called *namus* (women's pride or Pakhtun pride). Even a slight molestation of women is considered a serious offence. An illicit relation brings *tor* (stigma or shame) on the family of the female involved. In case of *tor* both the man and woman involved are killed (honour killing) or the matter is settled through the jirga according to Pakhtun customary laws. In this highly conservative culture marriage without the consent of the elders is considered a sin and a breach of Pakhtunwali and therefore the couple is often killed in the name of honour. The custom of *tor* provides men with the licence to kill, even though it is contradictory to Islamic laws and also against basic Human Rights.

Gherat and Nang (Pakhtun honour and Pakhtun dignity): A Pakhtun must maintain his Pakhtun dignity and identity called *gherat* (honour). This has great

importance in Pakhtun society and most other codes of life are aimed towards the preservation of one's honour or pride. The opposite of *gherath* is *begherat* (being dishonoured, with no self-esteem). Usually women (*khaza*), land (*zmaka*) and wealth (*zar*) are considered valuable in Pakhtun society and need to be protected at all costs. They therefore constitute the symbols of Pakhtun *gherat* and are potential sources of conflict and enmity in Pakhtun society (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1980; Lindhlo 1981; Shaheen 2000: 176; Taj 2004; Yousafzai and Gohar 2005; Ahmed 2006). Since possession and control over valuable commodities, particularly women, are imperative to a man's honour, this turns women into the embodiment of male honour and, therefore, their conduct is vital to the honour of male family members (Rabia 2001; Taj 2004). Thus a Pakhtun thinks of himself as most vulnerable through the acts of women of his family (Ahmed 1980: 202). In case of any behaviour such as infidelity or illicit sexual relations a woman damages the honour of her male family members and therefore is likely to be killed in order to restore that lost honour of men. That is why the phenomenon of honour killing is so widespread in Pakhtun society (Ahmed 1980: 202). Honour killing, which represents the masculine authoritative structure, is a legitimate act in the culture of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. While a woman may be killed supposedly for her illicit relations, often the latent motives for such a killing can be something else such as getting rid of the first wife to contract a second marriage, to avoid giving her her share in property or something similar (Shaheen 2004; Minallah 2010; Amnesty International 2010¹⁵).

A Pakhtun's *gherat* (dignity) may be expressed through his *nang* (competence, dignity and pride). *Nang* refers to the pursuit of an honourable life, a life

¹⁵ See <http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/pakistan/report-2010>, accessed on December 29, 2011.

approximating to the features of the *Pakhtunwali* (Ahmed 1980; Khattak et al. 2009).

Women's purdah (seclusion or veil): Pakhtun society is characterized by a strict purdah¹⁶ (seclusion) system (Weiss 1995). Often 'male honour' is reinforced when women observe strict purdah, have restricted mobility, abide by all the rules and regulations of Pakhtun society, and accept unquestioningly whatever fate men decide for them (Taj 2004: 22). Thus a woman's sexuality and chastity could be questioned if she, without proper purdah and approval, ventures out into the public sphere. This can make her vulnerable to violence (ibid). The more strictly a Pakhtun woman observes purdah, the more highly segregated and secluded from unknown men she is, the more she preserves and protects the honour of her family members. This rigid purdah system plays a deciding role in reducing women's access to education, work, and public resources and places where redress may be sought (Kamal 1999; Taj 2004).

Malatar (male force): Malatar means 'Da Mla Teer', the backbone of a person, family or tribe. It is also used for all male members of a family who are capable of carrying and using firearms. As Pakhtuns most of the time are involved in conflicts and enmities, therefore the number of males really matters in this society. It is for this reason that Pakhtuns prefer male children and see sons as 'guns, wealth, and power'. Male power (*malatar*) is also important for certain events such as *ashar* (mutual cooperation during harvesting and sowing seasons), *lakhkar* (tribal army or tribal male force), *badragga* (safe custody), *nagha* (a fine imposed by the jirga), and

¹⁶ In the context of Pakhtun culture women's purdah in its physical sense means the covering of a woman's body in a veil from head to toe in public and in moral terms it means enforcement of high standards of chastity on women (Taj, 2004: 22). In Pakhtoon culture women's purdah implies the customary seclusion and segregation of women from a *moharam*—a person whom a woman could legally marry. Purdah usually starts when a girl reaches her teenage years till old age, i.e. it covers the age of fecundity—the age in which a woman can bear children.

baramta (recovery). Males are so important in Pakhtun culture that a person who has no male child is often called a *merath* (have nothing). Because of the lack of a welfare state, weak state government, and the slow, corrupt and incompetent judicial system, as well as the conflict-ridden structure of this society, Pakhtun people rely on informal agencies such as the male members of the family for their security and protection. For this purpose the people of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa often practise polygamy, a potential factor promoting domestic violence against women, to have more male children.

The Pakhtun social setup and individual freedom: One of the important features of Pakhtun society is the joint family organization based in patriarchal and patrilineal principles (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1980; Shaheen 2004). Communal life may provide social and economic security, as each member contributes a share or all of their income to the common pool of resources. All sorts of family expenses such as food, clothing, education, health, births, marriages and deaths are remunerated from the common fund. Usually the father or older brother leads the family in relation to domestic as well as outside affairs. The structure of power and hierarchy in the family is strongly based on the structure of age and gender. Mostly the older male family members make all the family decisions regarding the division of responsibilities, marriages, career selection, and care of the property. Women and younger family members are seldom consulted regarding important family decisions.

However, the joint family structure is gradually giving way to individualistic trends under the impact of modernizing influences. It is losing its hold, particularly among the educated classes and well-off sections of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa population. However, the individual has little freedom and women in particular have little

choice and independence but to bow to the authority of men (Minallah 2003; Shaheen 2004).

Gender configuration in Pakhtun society: Pakhtun society maintains a strict pattern of specific gendered roles and spaces. Usually men occupy the public space and hold complete control of, for example, land, businesses, and positions of public authority while women, in theory, dominate the domestic sphere (Ahmed 1980; Boesen 1983; Shaheen 2004; Minallah 2009). The family structure is the main centre for encouraging male dominance because the male child in Pakhtun culture is valued and brought up as dominant and authoritative in the family while female children are considered a liability (Faery and Noor 2004). The birth of a female child is not welcomed while the birth of a male son is celebrated. The male child is usually preferred because of his social, economic, cultural and sometimes religious significance (Fikree and Pasha 2004). The son will have to ensure the security of the family and is conceived as the main source of income who will have to serve as support for his aging parents and have to carry the lineage. This attitude creates a sharp gender difference in the very early stages when the son is provided with the best education, best nourishment, best health facilities, etc while marriage is considered to be the sole concern in the life of a daughter (Kamal 1999).

Because of the social and economic insignificance of daughters in this society, producing a girl child is considered a woman's fault and they are held responsible for this. Discriminatory gender socialization in early adulthood fosters unequal power relationships in this society, which thus follows a cyclical pattern (Farooqi 1992; Faery and Noor 2004; Khan and Hussain 2008). In Pakhtun culture boys and girls in their early years are socialized according to Pakhtun cultural values and gendered spatiality is inculcated in their minds. Faery and Noor (2004: 39) argue

that in Pakistani society different values are transmitted to boys and girls from an early age. Girls are reared to be docile, obedient, and nice. In many places, they are brought up to believe that their role is to serve men, to sacrifice their own needs for the good of the man and for the well-being of the family (ibid). From their childhood, their movements are monitored, controlled and restricted so that they may not do anything insulting or dishonouring against the honour of family or male relatives (ibid). On the other hand men are prepared to be breadwinners, protectors of the family, and learn to discipline their women if they are not in compliance with the traditions and with men's wishes (ibid). Male dominance is considered quite normal everywhere in Pakistan (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Fikree et al. 2005).

The economic and social dependency of women on men: In Pakistan women's share in the economy and labour force participation (13.7% for females and 70.4% for males) is not proportionate to their share in the population (52% male and 48% female) (Ministry of Women and Development 2004). Agriculture absorbs 72.15% of the female labour, manufacturing 13.28%, community, social and personal services 10.54% (ibid). The situation of women's employment in the public sector remains very poor at only 5.4%. The general attitudes towards women's employment are not favourable and Pakistani society finds it very difficult to speak of women other than in terms of their gender roles as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters (Saleem 2003).

In the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, 38.7% of the population of ten years and above is considered part of the labour force, with men accounting for 32.6% and women 6.08% (Zakat Ushar, Social Welfare and Women Development Department 2003: 5). Women's employment in the province is 6.08%, which includes professional workers, administrative and managerial workers, clerical and related

workers, sale and service workers, agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry workers. The remaining 93.11% women are believed to be involved in unpaid labour, such as helping in the agricultural sector and domestic work. In theory all sectors of government and non-government institutions and departments are open to women who have the requisite qualification. However, due to conservative attitudes, the situation is the other way round (ibid). Two of the preferred occupations for women in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province are teaching and the medical field (Kamal 1999). Women's very limited paid employment opportunities thus create dependency in economic terms. Though a woman is expected to support the family through working in the fields, bringing water, looking after the cattle, cooking, washing the clothes and taking care of the children, her work is not valued and invisible (Raasta Development Consultants, Karachi and the Royal Netherlands Embassy Islamabad, Pakistan 1997). It is a general perception in Pakhtun society that women's employment is likely to have serious effects on women's fertility, and women's traditional roles as mothers and care providers in the family and that it can also have an effect on men's honour (Kamal 1999). Taking on jobs or running businesses, therefore, is not encouraged in this patriarchal social structure (Niaz 2003; Khan and Hussain 2008). The denial of women's economic rights thus promotes male dominance (Niaz 2003; Mumtaz 2007; Khan and Hussain 2008). In societies where men have control of all the productive resources and dominate the decision-making process, women face difficulty in getting redress or a divorce (Levinson 1989). According to Koenig et al. (2003) a number of studies have highlighted that socio-economic status is significantly related to the risk of domestic violence, with higher socio-economic status reducing that risk. One might thus

suggest that women's low socio-economic status in Pakhtun cultures makes them potentially more vulnerable to domestic violence.

The role of religion in the construction of gender-biased attitudes, gender disparity and gender-based violence: In south Asian cultures, and Muslim societies in particular, a certain gender ideology whereby males are expected to control family resources and dominate females in all aspects of social life is propagated and sanctioned by religion (Jasinski 2001; Pillai 2001; Haj-Yahia 2003; Koenig 2003; Niaz 2003; Saheed 2009). Societies characterized by structural gender inequality, rigid gender divisions of roles and status, notions of manhood linked to dominance, aggression, and honour increase the risk of domestic violence against women (Heise 1998). In Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan where societies are ultra-conservative, women are defined as dangerous and destructive if not under the control of their husbands (Barlas Asma 2002). The Islamic laws and teachings related to the rights and status of women are differently interpreted by different social and community settings in Pakistan (Niaz 2003: 175). Men in Pakistan often confuse social and cultural norms with Islamic views and mix up religious teachings with their customary actions (Perveen 1999). Thus women in Pakistan are the victims of different kinds of religious and traditional structures and if a woman asks questions about her status or about her actions to increase egalitarianism, she is considered suspect or even anti-religious and westernized (Hall 1992).

There is a great controversy among Muslims scholars on how to interpret verse 4:34 of the Qur'an. This verse has been used to support and legalize domestic violence against women in Pakistan (Perveen 2010). Dawood (1997) interprets it as:

Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because God has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them and forsake them in beds apart, and **beat (strike)** them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Surely God is high, supreme (Qur'an 4: 34).

The above verse of the Qur'an outlines the steps that spouses should follow in the event of marital discontent. Initially, verbal admonition in the form of a warning is suggested. Second, couples are encouraged to sleep apart (forsake them); the last resort is that a spouse can be struck (beaten) (Dawood 1997). Literal interpretations claim this gives men the right to verbally and physically abuse their wives, while more moderate interpretations suggest that 'strike' refers to a psychological strike as physical violence would disrupt and cause harm to the family and society (Manderson and Bennett 2003: 47).

Female subordination and male dominance is also propagated and supported by using the following verse of the Qur'an.

And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them. And Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise. (Qur'an 2: 228).

This verse is interpreted as either that women and men have equal yet different rights and obligations, or that women have lesser rights than men because of their lesser responsibilities. Those who support the latter view often argue that the different responsibilities of women and men relate to the domestic sphere for women and the public sphere for men, and that within the family women and men have mutual rights

and obligations. However, some argue that proper gender relations for Muslims require men to have authority over their wives (Manderson and Bennett, 2003: 44).

Regarding men's superiority and authority over women the following verses of the Qur'an are often quoted.

Men have authority over women because God has made the one [man] superior to other [woman], and because they spend their wealth to maintain them (Qur'an, 4: 34).

The evidence of two women is equal to that of one man (Qur'an, 2: 282).

The man is Qawwam (caretaker) of the woman (Qur'an, 4: 34).

Man is permitted to contract marriages with four women at a time (Qur'an, 4: 3).

In the laws of inheritance, the man's share is double that of woman (Qur'an, 4: 11, 12, 176).

Religious scholars in Pakistan often quote the above verses of the Qur'an as evidence that God created man as superior and women as inferior. The interpretations and the conclusions drawn by most religious scholars in Pakistan according to Sharif (2003) are contrary to the very essence of the Qur'an. Sharif (2003) argues that in most verses the Qur'an views both man and women as equal, particularly in the matters of rights and obligations because both man and woman have the same origin — Adam and Eve (Qur'an, 4: 1).

In Islam, most religious intellectuals are men, which ensures that male interests are represented in religious and state doctrines, ensuring that principally men determine women's status and roles, while Muslim feminists according to Ahmed (1992: 66) interpret the Qur'an differently from orthodox and androcentric Islamists. The

Sisters of Islam and Maranao NGOs in Malaysia, for example, promote women's rights to sexual freedom, work, education, justice and politics by interpreting the Qur'an in feminist ways (El Saadawi 1980; Ahmed 1992). The women's movement in Pakistan has found religious leaders to be its main opponents (Patel 1993). Religious scholars argue that women who demand their rights are following the agenda of the west, which is to secularize the Islamic society of Pakistan (Kirmani 2000). For them, the struggle for women's rights is against Islam. They consistently oppose any legislation that might bring freedom, and betterment for women (Perveen 2009). I think that the misinterpretation of Islamic laws by religious scholars and leaders and their own version of Islam in Pakistan strengthens the patriarchal agenda at all levels (domestic, community and state) and contributes to the subordinate status of women.

The gender-biased political structure: The non-democratic set-up of political parties, the criminalization of politics, the culture of corruption that permeates public life and the fear of character assassination effectively block women's participation in government structures (Zakat Ushar Social Welfare and Women Development Department 2003). In spite of some positive steps that Pakistan has taken to promote women's status such as establishing the Ministry of Women Development (MoWD) in 1989; the constitution of a National Commission on the Status of Women in 2000; the formulation of a National Policy on Development and the Empowerment of Women in 2002; the ratification of the International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 100 on Equal Remuneration; the 33% reserved quota for women in the Local Government system and the 17% representation for women in National and Provincial Assemblies in 2002, still women across Pakistan are subject to cultural and religious impediments, discrimination, intimidation and injustice (Zakat, Ushar

and Social Welfare Department of NWFP 2003). Women in Pakistan have remained marginalized with respect to a citizen's fundamental right of political participation, although Articles 25 and 34 of the constitution of Pakistan guarantee gender equality and the full participation of women in all spheres of national life. Women who have a political background, high economic status, with moderate and secular attitudes and an impressive educational background can join and even lead a political party, such as Benazir Bhutto (Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan), but she too did little for women's empowerment because of the strong opposition from the Islamist political parties and was finally assassinated in 2008 by Bait Ullah Masood, a Taliban commander.

Bari (2005) argues that women's enhanced participation in governance structures is key to redressing gender equality in societies, but women in Pakistan face serious problems in the political field. As voters, the biggest problems according to Bari (2005) are non-registration (48% women in Punjab and 53.5% in other provinces are non-registered) and registration under their husband's or father's names rather than their own, the strict purdah culture, the long distance to the polling stations and convenience problems. As political candidates, Khan (2007) notes that women's biggest hurdles are the patriarchal political structure, lack of required funds to get a party ticket and contest elections, lack of security and independence for campaigning, etc. Similarly disorganized women's wings, lack of gender mainstreaming in leadership, and lack of democratic norms in political parties impede women from moving up in their own political parties (ibid). Socio-cultural norms that promote female segregation, or do not accept the validity of even marginal political participation by women, have also deprived a substantial number of women of the right to vote. It is common for political parties or rival candidates,

particularly in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, to mutually agree not to let their women supporters come and vote (Zakat, Ushar and Social Welfare Department of NWFP 2003).

In the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, during every election the unanimous jirga decisions of all political parties result in a massive denial of franchise to the female electorate (Bari 2005). Announcements are made on mosque loudspeakers that voting by women is un-Islamic and a woman going to a polling station will do so at the peril of her house being burnt down and social boycott. An extremely hostile and threatening atmosphere is created during elections that forcibly prevents women from contesting elections or casting their vote in majority of the districts in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (Zakat, Ushar and Social Welfare Department of NWFP 2003).

Women's equality as candidates and voters continues to suffer not because of state policy, but primarily due to traditions, social structure, cultural constraints, low levels of education, male dominance in the political parties and the influence of orthodox religious groups in Pakistan (Mumtaz 2005). Both the formal and informal system of Pakistan plays a crucial role in maintaining this biased gendered ideology.

The criminal justice system and the issue of domestic violence against women:

The role of the law, police, legal establishment, and medicological system in Pakistan is remarkable in the perpetuation of domestic violence against women (Burney 1999; Niaz 2003). Domestic violence is a pressing problem in Pakistan, and it is not only aggravated by the state's insufficient response to it but also encouraged by being considered a private matter which is rarely addressed by the judicial system (Burney 1999; Niaz 2003; Andersson et al. 2010). Pakistan does not have any specific laws protecting women victims of domestic violence and punishing the

perpetrators of such violence (Burney 1999; Niaz 2003; Perveen 2010a). In this regard the proposed legislation addressing the cases of domestic violence is still waiting to be passed in the National Assembly, owing to the biased attitudes and pressure of the religious parties (Perveen 2010a).

Presently, domestic violence cases are registered under the *Qisas* (lit. retribution) and *Diyat* (lit. compensation) Ordinance 1990 (Niaz 2003; Andersson et al. 2010). Actually, all acts of causing intentional or unintentional physical harm to another including murder, attempted murder, or hurt are registered under this ordinance (Andersson et al 2010: 1966). The ordinance is in compliance with Islamic criminal laws, and this makes it very difficult for women victims of violence to fulfil evidentiary requirements. Under this ordinance a crime can be revoked if the victim is willing to be compensated through money or decides to reconcile (ibid). The abused woman is often pressurised to pardon the abuser once a case has been registered under this ordinance (ibid). Niaz (2003: 181) argues that ‘honour killings are also encompassed by the murder provision of the Qisas and Diyat Laws. In many cases these honour killings are justified on the basis that victims are engaging in immoral behaviour that could not be tolerated in an Islamic State such as Pakistan’.

Ironically, women victims who file rape charges open themselves up to the possibility of being prosecuted for illicit sex, if they fail to prove rape under the Hudood (Zina) Ordinances¹⁷, which criminalize adultery. As a result when a woman victim of domestic violence resorts to the judicial system for redress, she is more likely to receive further abuse and victimization (Burney 1999). Thus due to the lack

¹⁷ The Hudood Ordinance is a set of Islamic penal laws introduced by General Zia-ul-Haq in 1979. Hudood means prevention, hindrance, restraint, prohibition and hence a restrictive ordinance or statute of Allah regarding things lawful and unlawful (Lippman et al. 1988: 38).

of clear domestic laws the agencies of redress and investigation have to treat domestic violence against women as a nonjusticiable, private or family matter or, at best, an issue for the civil rather than the criminal courts (Burney 1999; Niaz 2003).

Domestic violence cases are not seriously investigated in Pakistan (Burney 1999; Niaz 2003; Andersson et al. 2010). The police often resist or misreport the claims of a woman who complains of acts of violence. Domestic violence that falls within the scope of the criminal law, such as assault or attempt to murder, is usually ignored or downplayed by the police as a result of biased attitudes, ignorance and lack of training with respect to the scope of the law. According to Burney (1999) the police in Pakistan respond to domestic violence charges by trying to reconcile the concerned parties rather than filing a report and arresting the perpetrators. Such resistance on the part of the police to recognize domestic violence as a crime¹⁸ allows the battering of women to continue with impunity and contributes to a climate that deters women from reaching out for safety and justice.

Overall, the status of women in Pakhtun society varies depending on geographical location and class. For example, women, live a relatively better life in urban areas and middle and upper-class sections of society because there are greater opportunities for them as they can get access to higher education, paid and professional work (Weiss 1995; Burney 1999). However, in the broader context women in this traditional society live like second-class citizens. They are perpetual legal minors under the custody of male relatives (Jalal 1991; Ahmed 2006; Khan and Samina 2009; Minallah et al. 2009). The inferior status of women in Pakhtun

¹⁸ In the early stages of recognition of domestic violence this was also the case in the UK (see e.g. Hearn 1998: 8-10).

tribal structure, feudal, Islamic and Indo-British laws has remained unchanged (Kamal 1999: 1).

Research studies document a significant relationship between domestic violence against women, unequal power relations, and masculinity (see e.g. Connell 1995; Heise 1998; Hearn 1998; Watts and Zimmerman 2002; Khan 2000). I therefore now move to a discussion of masculinity and violence.

Masculinity and violence

Violence is dominated by masculine role players in all modern and primitive societies (Connell 1995; Bowker 1998; Hearn 1998; Collier and Hall 2000). The international statistics on violence and its relation to the gender of its perpetrators estimates that 90% to 100% of violence is perpetrated by men and less than 10% by women (Bowker 1998). Worldwide there is a strong link among men's violence, privilege and inequality (Ferguson et al. 2004: 17). Violence may bring power and dominance, but it may also bring unhappiness and self-destruction (Bowker 1998; Hearn 1998). Men who are violent are generally not happy men even if they 'enjoy' the violence (Maiuro et al. 1988). Most men are not violent, but when violence occurs, it is mostly men who do it (Bowker 1998; Hearn 1998).

The question arises why do men commit violence? To put it another way, why is violence masculine? In fact, it is very hard to find a simple answer to this question. Men's violence can be explained and conceptualized in many ways. For example, biological and socio-biological explanations assert that men's bodies are the bearers of natural masculinity (Connell 1995). Accordingly men inherit with their masculine

genes tendencies to aggression, competitiveness, territoriality, promiscuity, and forming men's clubs (ibid). Socio-psychological accounts emphasize men's personality types, personality disorder, and personal constructs through socialization and learning within the family (Hearn 1998; Ferguson et al 2004). Psychoanalytical explanations hypothesize projection and displacement. Social sciences discourses use concepts which are based in interpersonal, collective, institutional, structural or societal processes, including poverty, stress, alienation, power, class, ideology, race, gender etc (see e.g. Connell 1995: 3-42; Hearn 1998: 17-33). However, with all of these explanations there are problems (Connell 1995; Hearn 1998).

According to Ferguson et al. (2004: 25) a useful framework to explain men's violence would be to distinguish first the biological accounts from the social, and after that to explore the social discourses that focus on the individual and his psychology, i.e. the socialization and learning within the family, as well as the broader socio-cultural relations of power, for instance, structural theories of patriarchal society (Hearn 1987, 1998).

Men's violence according to Ferguson et al. (2004: 25) and Hearn (1998) revolves around the question of gender and of masculinity, and it is therefore important to examine how gender functions at individual level, at the levels of family, social structure and cultural patterns in a society. In this context, Hearn (1998: 4) argues that gender-based violence is social and not biological as research has shown that males in some cultures are less violent than others. This supports the notion of the social origins of those differences (Ferguson et al. 2004). These differences according to Ferguson et al (2004: 26) can be traced through the cultural definitions of masculinity. Ferguson et al. (2004) argue that to be a man varies in four significant ways:

First, masculinity operates differently in different social settings. Connell (1995) asserts that definitions of masculinity have mostly taken the cultural standpoint, but have followed different strategies to characterize the type of person who is masculine. In some cultures men are encouraged to be steadfast and stoic to prove their masculinity while in other cultures men are expected to demonstrate bravado, toughness, competitiveness, aggression, sexual prowess, etc. (Ferguson et al. 2004: 25). In some cultures the definition of masculinity operates in a more relaxed way, for instance, based on civic participation, emotional responsiveness and collective provision for community needs (ibid).

Second, the meanings of masculinity vary within any particular culture over time (Ferguson et al. 2004: 26). In this regard historical research shows the ways in which definitions of masculinity have changed. For example, in Europe in the 21st century masculinity is different from what it was thought in the 17th century (Ferguson et al 2004: 26). Liddle (1996) argues that structural conditions influence masculinity, e.g. the shift of England from a medieval to a bourgeois society also brought changes in masculinities and gender relations. He further asserts that aristocratic masculinities focused on a man's relationship to family and blood line and on his duty to honour others through praiseworthy acts, but with the rise of the capitalist state, bourgeois masculinities emphasized individualism, scientific rationality, control, and a subdivision into public and private spheres—(with a separate and distinct personae for each).

Third, the meanings and definitions of masculinity vary among different groups of men within any particular culture at any particular time (Ferguson et al 2004: 26). For instance, not all American, Swedish, or British men are the same in terms of

their behaviour, attitudes and physical structure. Duvvury and Nayak (2003: 47) argue that 'beliefs regarding masculinity include beliefs at the personal (individual) level about being a man, perceived beliefs about men from a group reference (collective level, e.g. caste, religion), and beliefs about the ideal (societal level) which may reflect human, rather than gender-specific, values such as honesty and courage'. Thus masculinities continuously evolve. They are structured by class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, religion and region of the country.

Finally, the meaning of masculinity also changes over the life course. For example, the issues confronting a younger man, to prove toughness and success are different from those for an older man facing retirement (Ferguson et al. 2004: 26).

Ferguson et al. (2004: 26) argue that if there are numerous meanings of masculinity, and if it differs across cultures, over time, among men within the same culture, and changes over the life cycle, then the concept of masculinity is not constant and universal and or common to all men. However, one can recognize different definitions of masculinity, and therefore it may mean different things to different men and groups of people at different times (ibid). To recognize different kinds of masculinities is to recognize and examine the (power) relations between them (Connell 1995). Huggins and Fatouros (1996) argue, if masculinities vary in form and content then masculinities also express themselves differently in relation to violence. In this regard the standard of hegemonic masculinity provides a social ideal against which various other masculinities are measured, judged, and must compete (Jefferson 2002).

Connell (1995: 77) argues that 'hegemonic masculinity is the culturally idealized form of masculinity in a given historical setting, which is neither transhistorical nor transcultural, but varies from society to society and changes within a particular society over time'. Connell (1995) further maintains that in many societies, hegemonic masculinity is culturally honoured, glorified and extolled at the symbolic level, such as in the mass media, and is constructed in relation both to subordinated masculinities (based on race, class and sexual preference) and to women. In this sense hegemonic masculinity can be defined as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answers to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell 1995: 77). However, it is not always necessary that the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are the most powerful people. Hegemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between the cultural ideal and the institutional power collective if not individual (ibid). The top levels of business, military and government provide a corporate display of masculinity and also a successful claim to authority. Connell (1995) claims that when conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded. New groups may challenge old solutions and construct a new hegemony, and also the dominance of any group of men may be challenged by women.

Thus men's identity and relations to each other and to women, have been shaped by a complex system of power. An important aspect of men's power and sense of power is the use or potential use of the threat of violence (Hearn 1998: 4). Thus an understanding of men's violence to men and women needs to consider the social

context of gender. Now I move to discuss explanations of men's violence against women.

Explaining men's violence against women

In making sense of men's violence to women it is necessary to understand the social construction of masculinities (Hearn 1998: 35). Masculinity is generated through relations between men, and men's violence against women may be a means of regulating those relations (Hearn and Whitehead 2006: 38). Messerschmidt (1993 in Hearn 1998: 35) has argued that 'violence is available for the making of masculinity, or at least specific forms of masculinities'. According to Hearn and Whitehead (2006: 40) 'violence is often deeply connected with the taken-for-grantedness of what it is to be a man, and the prerogatives that are assumed to be associated with that status, including the importance of relations between men'. Thus to be a man means to dominate and control, often through the use of violence, and structural factors play a part in the generation of men's violence (Pringle 1995: 100). In this regard Pringle notes that 'men's violence to women is a conscious and chosen act, the result of a hierarchal power relation' (Pringle 1995: 100).

Men's violence to women has been conceptualized and explained differently. For example, Straus (1977, in Hearn 1998: 31) identified seven interrelated factors that can contribute to men's violence against women:

1. High level of conflicts inherent in the family
2. High level of violence in society
3. Family socialization into violence

4. Cultural norms legitimizing violence between family members
5. Violence integrated into the personality and behavioural script
6. The sexist organization of society and its family system
7. Women put up with violence for various structural and ideological reasons

Hearn (1998: 31) comments that all these factors appear to be elements of patriarchy.

Heise (1998: 262) through her ecological framework conceptualizes violence against women 'as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and socio-cultural factors'. Flood and Pease (2009) document violence against women as consequence of social and economic determinants at the individual, relational, community, organizational, and societal level, and group these determinants into three broad clusters, i.e. gender roles and relations, social norms supporting violence, and access to resources and systems of support.

Hearn (1998: 214) argues that the operation of power is complex. Nonetheless men's violence to women can be conceptualized as a form of power through: a) societal realities of men's structural power over women, b) the power relations embedded in family ideology and family forms, heterosexuality and marriage, c) the specification of interpersonal relations, and d) interpersonal/intrapsychic relations of those involved (Hearn 1998: 214; Hearn and Whitehead 2006: 43). Men's dominance is a characterizing feature of each of these relations (Hearn and Whitehead 2006: 43).

According to Hearn (1998: 214) men's violence against women happens within dialectical social processes. That is men's (direct or indirect) control of women in heterosexual relationships may be achieved through violence. This can be, for

example, with respect to the woman's (assumed or known) sexual fidelity/infidelity; control of housework, childcare and mothering; the woman's appearance, drinking, autonomy, movement, friends and activity; 'provocation' by the woman; etc (ibid). The use of violence may be effective or ineffective in exerting this control, and it may sometimes produce the opposite effect, for example, that the woman may resent and resist attempted control of her autonomy to a greater extent and indeed may leave. These processes are most easily understood as dialectical—in several senses. They involve participation in the contradictions of controlling and being controlled, dominance and deference, power and resistance, that themselves develop differently over time (Hearn 1998: 214).

Men's gendered power then operates in time and space (Hearn 1998: 215). For example men's violence to women may involve the use of domination of physical and social space not only in certain specific locations such as the living rooms, bedrooms, kitchen, the streets, but also in terms of the occupation of spaces between people. 'Violence in this regard occupies a space; it takes up space, forges gaps and physical connections; it also controls the space of the violated person' (Hearn 1998: 215). Further, Hearn argues that 'the use of space that occurs in and through violence is a basic form of existence in itself, and not just a reflection of some other determinant of behaviour, such as social role, or some other measure of behaviour, such as the use of time' (ibid: 215). Such complications of power and the oppression of women provide a framework for the differential understanding and interpretation of men's experiences around being violent to women (Hearn 1998: 215).

The most reasonable explanation of men's violence against women for the last 30 years has arisen from second-wave feminism and in the UK case especially

Women's Aid (Hearn and Whitehead 2006: 42; Hearn 1998: 8). In this regard the majority of the relevant research documents that men's violence to women is the result of a system of structured power and operation that constitutes patriarchy and patriarchal social relations (see e.g. Dobash and Dobash 1979; Yllo and Bograd 1988; Smith 1990; Haj-Yahia 2003; Niaz 2003). The foundation of this approach was laid down by Dobash and Dobash's (1979) *Violence Against Women: A Case Against Patriarchy*. They document that men resort to battering when they perceive their wives not to be living up to the patriarchally ordained role prescriptions of the 'good wife'. Accordingly to them there are three main triggers that spark male violence: jealousy; a perception that the women fails to perform her housework or other wifely services such as preparing him a hot meal; and her challenging him about economic matters within the family such as housekeeping money. They argue that male violence is a cultural phenomenon that is linked to the patriarchal domination of women by men. Yllo and Strauss (1984) too argue that the levels of wife-beating are highest when the family norms are patriarchal. Smith (1990) employs the notion of 'patriarchal ideology' (a system of beliefs, values and ideas that support men's domination of women and depicts that domination as natural which vary by culture) and argues that different forms of patriarchy are sustained in part by ideologies that act as the 'energy source' of patriarchal domination. These ideologies cast men and women in different roles. Smith (1990) suggests that husbands with less education, low income and low-status jobs are more likely to subscribe to 'an ideology of familial patriarchy'. Hearn (1998) argues that it is because of this fundamental patriarchal attitude in society that people are located differently, particularly by gender. Feminist research and literature suggests that within patriarchal relations violence to women is often rationalized and normalized

by blaming the victim (Hearn and Whitehead 2006: 44).

Howell and Willis (1990) in *Societies at Peace* document that the definition of masculinity has a strong impact on a person's inclination towards violence. According to them in societies where men are permitted to acknowledge fear, levels of violence are low. But in societies where masculinity is defined in terms of bravado, aggression, toughness, in the denial of fear, violence is likely to be higher. In such societies the definitions of masculinity and femininity are also very highly differentiated, and men in such societies are more likely to perpetrate domestic violence against women.

Hearn and Whitehead (2006: 51) document some of the themes identified by anthropologists as leading to both interpersonal violence and inter-societal violence are:

1. The ideal for manhood as a fierce and handsome warrior and the cultivation of militarism;
2. Public leadership associated with male dominance, both of men over other men and of men over women;
3. Women prohibited from public and political participation;
4. Most public interaction between men, not between men and women or among women;
5. Boys and girls systematically separated from an early age;
6. Initiation of boys focused on lengthy constraint of boys, during which time the boys are separated from women, taught male solidarity, bellicosity, and endurance, and trained to accept the dominance of older groups of men;
7. Emotional displays of male virility, ferocity, and sexuality highly

elaborated, with the eroticization and sexualization of violence;

8. The ritual celebration of fertility focuses on male generative ability, not females;

9. Male economic activities and products of male labour prized over female ones (see Kimmel 2002b).

Hearn and Whitehead (2006: 51) comment that the less gender differentiation between women and men, the less likely is men's violence towards women. In my thesis I shall analyse how the social structure of Pakhtun society contributes to the construction of Pakhtun violent and misogynist masculinity.

How men account for their violence against women

In this section I discuss how men in different cultures talk about and perceive their perpetration of violence against women. In his in-depth study of around 75 men Jeff Hearn (1998) made a thorough interrogation of the violent behaviours of men and discussed the different ways men talk about their violence to women. He documents that men in their accounts of violence to women excuse, explain or exonerate it.

Hearn (1998: 84) found that men usually express their violence as a specific incident, or less often a series of incidents, occurring at a certain time and place. According to Hearn violent incidents occurred throughout a relationship, or they may mark its beginning, middle or end, or aftermath. For example, one man according Hearn (1998: 84) explained his violence at the end of the relationship: '... yes, there was some violence. The day she left I hit her'. Thus splitting up

could be a particular dangerous time for women as some men responded to this with increased anger, control and violence (ibid). Some men would attempt to maintain control of women after separation by returning to physical violence. For example, Hearn (1998) found that one man interviewed used physical violence after he had separated because he knew this would appear out of character and be especially hurtful to her. He also explained how he hit the woman in the street hard enough to hurt her but not to drop their child she was holding (ibid).

Hearn (1998) found that men's violence may be described as concentrated at certain times, days of the week or times of the year. For example, some men reported Friday nights being a particularly likely time for their violence, so much so that reference to this particular evening carried a special fear within their family. A few men spoke of the additional tensions of Christmas and New Year. Such times may involve men and women spending more time together, extra demands from family and friends, public or semi-public displays and expectations, and the use of large amounts of alcohol (Hearn 1998: 84).

Some men according to Hearn specifically 'chronicled an evolving, often escalating, personal history of violence. For example, one man recalled: 'I think one of the first times would have been a slap or a twisted wrist or something daft' (Hearn 1998: 84). This Hearn notes was explained in a rather dismissive way as a prelude to what he himself perceived as 'more serious' violence. Thus according to Hearn men's construction of the timing of violence, or rather the location of violence in time, includes references to different kinds of time and meanings of time. The perceived timing of violence may also have significance in relation to the man's perception of the development of the relationship with the woman

(Hearn 1998: 85).

When men account for violence, they often both give an explanation and construct a rationale for that violence (Hearn 1998: 105). Self-disclosive accounts according to Hearn differ in a number of ways: in the form of, for example, excuse, justification, and the content of these forms and structures, for instance, behaviours of the woman, other people, past events, drink etc. Form and content are not different. Rather there are common interconnections between them (Hearn 1998).

Using data from in-depth interviews carried out among men in three Peruvian cities Fuller (2001: 26) explain the motives that triggered men's violence against their partners. She found that male aggression follows a pattern which expresses the contradiction between a representation of the conjugal bond as founded in mutual reciprocity and solidarity and a masculine culture that stresses male authority and the importance of the networks of male friends.

She found that 38 (out of 78) of the interviewed men, i.e. almost 50%, recalled having hit their partners on some occasion. According to the men interviewed, quarrels began when their spouses reproach them for their sexual affairs with other women or for spending too much money with their friends. The interviewees admitted that their wives had the right to demand that they be responsible and faithful. However, the men said that they could not comply with these demands because this would mean neglecting their relationships with their peers, and this could mean submitting to female domination. 'In both cases it would endanger their male status, either because they would no longer belong to the male circle or because, in submitting themselves to the authority of their wives, they would place themselves in a female position' (Fuller 2001: 26).

Men argued that if they sacrifice themselves to provide support for their families, then women should dedicate themselves entirely to their domestic obligations (Fuller 2001: 27). Further, she found that men legitimated their aggression with the need they had to restore the order disrupted by female insubordination – either because the woman did not comply with her duties or because she demanded too vigorously that her partner comply with his marital obligations (Fuller 2001: 27). Thus through men's accounts Fuller (2001) notes that men said it was basically the women who provoke violence.

Other researchers have also found that men blame women for men's violent behaviour (Levitt et al. 2008) and that many men thought violence towards women was acceptable behaviour (Dibble and Strauss 1980).

In a study in Karachi, Pakistan Fikree et al. (2005: 52) interviewed 176 married men to about their attitudes towards domestic violence against women. They found that nearly all of the interviewed men (94.9%) reported the perpetration of verbal abuse in marital life, 87 of 176 (49.4%) men confessed to a lifetime prevalence of marital physical abuse, while 84 men reported either slapping, hitting or punching their wives. The most common reasons for spousal arguments included issues related to children (71.6%), money (71.0%), the wife's attitude, i.e. not obeying/listening to the husband's wishes, being disrespectful to the mother-in-law/ father-in-law, going out to visit natal family or friends without permission etc., (41.5%).

The socio-economic and education status of the husband and wife were found to be significantly associated with abusive behaviour. Men classified as poor, were three times more likely to perpetrate physical abuse than those who were economically sound. Similarly, wives with no formal education were nearly five times more likely

to be physically abused than wives with some formal education. Endogamous marriages were not protective against physical abuse. Men who reported being abused as children were nearly five times more likely to practise physical abuse as adults.

Men were asked to describe societal normative perceptions of domestic violence. Almost half of the men thought that husbands have a right to hit their wives (46.0%), while (88.6%) perceived a tolerance for abuse by the general public (Fikree et al. 2005: 55). A study conducted in Bradford, United Kingdom, found that Muslim men used Islam to justify violence against women (Macey 1999). Similarly studies document that nearly one-third of male respondents in Singapore considered that it was acceptable for a man to beat his wife (Choi and Edleson 1996), and the lower the level of the man's education the higher the propensity to justify wife beating in Arabian culture (Haj-Yahia 1998a).

In this thesis I shall analyse how Pakhtun men account for their violence against women. In this I draw on interviews with Pakhtun men I conducted in 2009-10.

The organization of thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters and a conclusion. In the current chapter (Introduction and Background), I highlighted the rationale, importance and my personal and professional reasons for undertaking this study. I then discussed that violence against women, domestic violence against women in particular, is omnipresent and occurs in all societies. However, through a relative comparison and analysis of the estimated facts and figures regarding the reported incidents of

violence against women in the population of Pakistan in general and in Pakhtun society in particular, I showed the under-reporting of violence against women in this culture, because of the privatization and sensitization of this issue. In discussing Pakhtun culture as the background of my study I outlined how the social and cultural structure of Pakhtun society sets up a differential gender power structure, gender-biased attitudes, sex-segregated roles and norms, and relegates women to the lower ranks of hierarchies. I then provided a description of the construction of masculinity in Pakhtun culture and highlighted the relation of masculinity to violence. I also provide an account of how men's violence against women has been explained and conceptualized. Towards the end I outlined how men perceive and talk about their violence against women in the west and other cultures.

In chapter 2 (Methodology), I provide an explanation of the process and procedure for conducting of my research. In this chapter I discuss my choice of qualitative methodology; how I selected my study respondents and areas of fieldwork; the procedure for conducting the interviews; the process of data transcription and analysis. This chapter also examines the issues I faced and the strategies I adopted to counter these issues during the course of conducting my research and when interviewing.

Chapters 3 to 5 are my analysis chapters, presenting my findings. In the first analysis chapter (Chapter 3) I examine my interviewees' views of the gender structure of Pakhtun society, specifically focusing on how my respondents discussed Pakhtun masculinity as ideal and how it operates in reality as articulated through the notions of *gherat*, *badal*, *narintoob* and *saritoob* etc. In this chapter I also focus on the Islamic configuration of Pakhtun masculinity and examine the hierarchical

structure of Pakhtun society and masculinity and its role in the facilitation of aggression, conflicts, and domestic violence against women.

In my second analysis chapter (chapter 4), I examine the Pakhtun family structure, and analyse in which family type my participants considered women to be particularly vulnerable to violence and why. I also analyse the different marriage patterns, for example endogamous and exogamous marriages, arranged and love marriages, polygamy, and different customs pertaining to Pakhtun marriages which my interviewees thought jeopardise women's lives and expose them to violence. Here, I used three different vignettes to explore my respondents' views of the sensitive issues faced by women in Pakhtun society.

The last analysis chapter of this thesis (chapter 5) focuses on gender spatialization and domestic violence in Pakhtun society. In this chapter I explore how social spaces in Pakhtun society are constructed, distributed, contested and negotiated. Here, I use the concept of 'intersectionality' to examine how space intersects with gender, age, class, caste, and ethnicity and contributes to producing different social status and role allocations. I also analyse the effects of the purdah system in Pakhtun culture in terms of violence against women. Further, I discuss my informants' views of the criminal justice system of the Pakhtun, the Jirga, and its role in blocking women's empowerment and representation.

In the conclusion of this thesis I summarise my main findings on men's perceptions of the different conditions encouraging the perpetration of domestic violence against women in Pakhtun society, and discuss their implications for policy and future research.

Chapter 2: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

I decided to focus on researching the conditions that structure masculinity and support the perpetration of domestic violence in Pakhtun society for four main reasons: first, violence against women in this context has already been researched (Hassan 1995; Amnesty International 1999; Burney 1999; Fikree and Bhatti 1999; Shaikh 2003, 2000; Fikree et al. 2005; Ali and Gavino 2007; Khan and Hussain 2008; Naeem et al. 2008; Rabbani et al. 2008; Ali et al. 2009; Minallah et al. 2009; Andersson et al. 2010; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2010). Second, as a male researcher it was difficult for me to gain appropriate access to women as informants, given that Pakhtun culture is highly sex-segregated with a strictly enforced purdah system. Third, much less is known about masculinity and domestic violence in this society than about women as victims of such violence. Fourth, as violence against women is frequently perpetrated by men, they are therefore an important aspect of this issue. I thus framed my research design to understand men's view of the construction and performance of masculinities and how this is related to domestic violence against women in Pakhtun society. In this chapter I shall discuss my methodology, the identification and selection of the respondents, the selection of the research sites, the issue of working in an unstable and hostile environment, the interview process, ethical concerns, power relationships and the insider and outsider identity, the transcription of the interviews and the analysis of the data. I shall also

discuss the issues and challenges I encountered during the fieldwork and the strategies I adopted to overcome them.

Choosing my methodology

A research methodology according to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996: 13) is 'a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which a claim for knowledge is evaluated'. Social sciences researchers at the start of a research project are faced with a variety of options and alternatives of methods and tools for data collection and have to make a strategic decision about which to choose (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Denscombe 2003). In my research I had to deal with male respondents in an unstable political environment within a highly sex-segregated social structure to understand their views on a sensitive issue (domestic violence against women). Some of these respondents were also illiterate. I therefore decided upon a qualitative research methodology because it is flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data is produced (Lee 1993; Mason 1996; Oakley 2000). This method of research is very widespread in western culture (Denscombe 2003; Seale et al. 2004). It provides a basic insight into how the social world is interpreted, understood, perceived and produced by the informants (Mason 1996; Denzin and Lincoln 1998; Creswell 2003; Holstein and Gubrium 2003).

I collected my data through in-depth face-to-face interviews because it is a useful method for data generation which enables the researcher to gain an insight into individually articulated perceptions (Mason 1996; Atkinson and Silverman 1997;

Oakley 2000). One reason for conducting interviews, as already stated, was that I was going to talk with both literate and illiterate respondents. If I had chosen to work with a questionnaire, this would have been difficult for illiterate respondents unless an interviewer read out the questions and noted their answers. Quite apart from the closedness of questionnaires—an issue in particular when one deals with sensitive questions and cannot ask directly about a topic—using an interviewer to note questionnaire responses is disempowering to interviewees who have to rely on the interviewer (already constructed as superior for being literate) to note their responses correctly. I wanted to avoid these potential complications by talking directly with my informants. Similarly, other methods such as surveys tend to focus on fact-finding (Rubin and Rubin 1995; Denscombe 2003) while observation methods are used to record occurrences in their natural context (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996; Denscombe 2003). But for me it was difficult to enter into the private lives of people with a very powerful sense of privacy to collect information on the very sensitive and private issue of domestic violence against women. So interviewing seemed the most appropriate tool for data collection because it provides an opportunity for the researcher to acquire a rich understanding of other people's views while interacting with and listening to them (Silverman 1993; Rubin and Rubin 1995; Mason 1996).

I designed a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix II) including vignettes about incidents of domestic violence (see Appendix III) to elicit information regarding this sensitive and complex matter. The idea was to have a framework within which to explore the conditions and reasons for the perpetration of domestic violence whilst remaining open to what my interviewees might say. Bruggess (1984: 102) calls this approach a 'conversation with a purpose' because it gives the

researcher a greater freedom to alter the sequence of questions or to ask, in case of need, supplementary questions as well as to skip certain questions if not required (Merton et al. 1990; Mason 1996; Creswell 2003; Bryman 2008; Gilbert 2008; Kothari 2008). The flexible nature and strength of semi-structured interviews in the understanding and exploration of subjective attitudes, concepts and opinions of people was the main drive for my selection of this kind of approach for data generation.

I conducted interviews with 32 respondents in four different locations of three districts, one each in the district of Dir Upper (tehsil Dir Upper) and Dir Lower (village Chakdara), and two locations (Madina town and village Palosi) in the district of Peshawar, of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. In each of the four places eight respondents were selected and interviewed on the basis of four broad categories, i.e. ethnicity, gender, age and education.

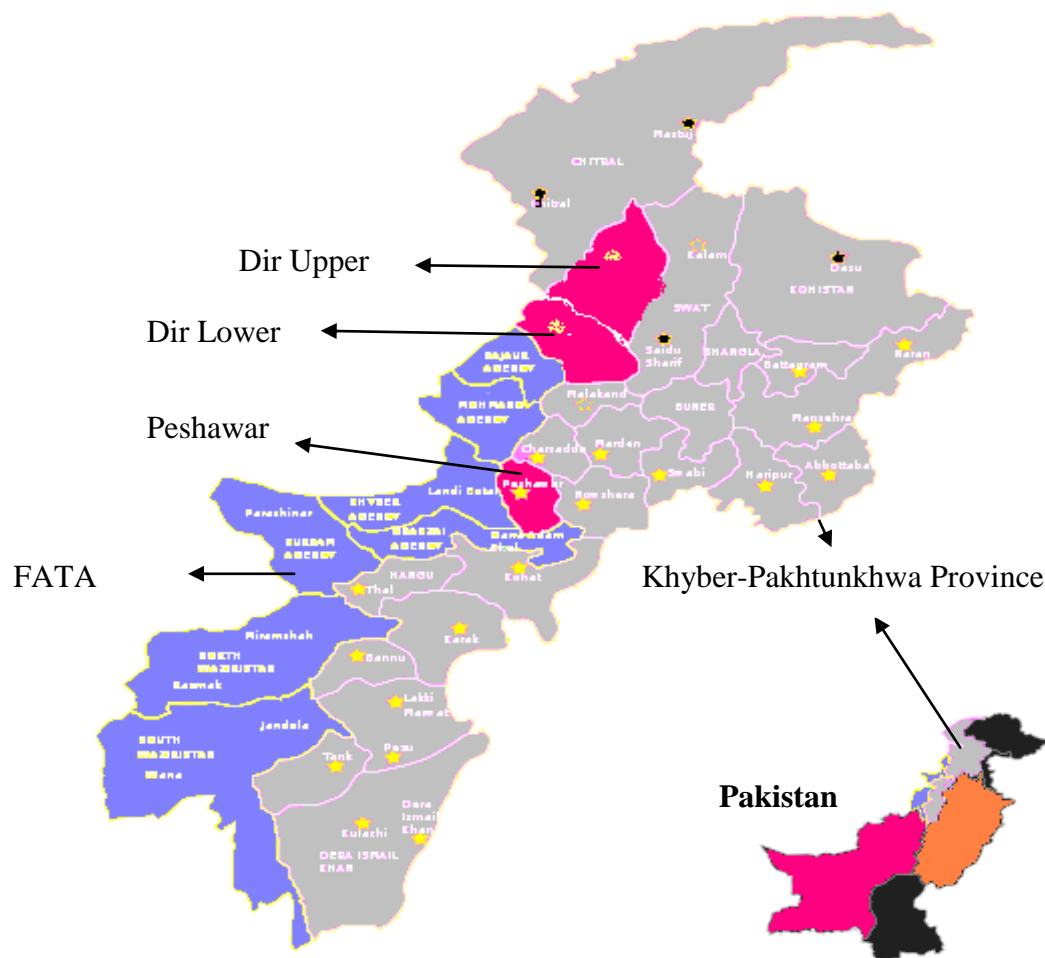
Participants' location

Initially I wanted to conduct my fieldwork in different areas of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province but due to security reasons and the unstable political situation of the province it was not safe to move around there and get access to the majority of the areas. I therefore decided to confine my research to the areas where the situation was relatively peaceful. For this purpose the following three districts were selected for the conduct of my fieldwork as shown in the Figure 2.

Dir Upper

The Dir Upper district is situated in the northern part of Pakistan. It was established in 1996 when the old district of Dir was divided into upper and lower parts. Before its merger with Pakistan in 1969, Dir was a princely state ruled by Shah Jehan Khan, the Nawab of Dir. The district is dominated by high mountains covered by forest. Daily wages, small scale farming, trade, government employment and working overseas are the main sources of income for its people. The women share the work with their men in agriculture in addition to their household duties.

Figure 2. Map of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan and selected districts for the fieldwork.



Source: <http://www.findpk.com/yp/html/Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.png>, (adapted by Muhammad Saeed), accessed November 17, 2011.

For the purposes of administration, the district is divided into Dir and Wari subdivisions and 5 tehsils¹⁹ which include Dir, Barawal, Kalkot, Wari, and Chapar. I selected and conducted interviews in tehsil Dir for the following reasons. First, the situation in Dir Upper was relatively normal and peaceful compared to other districts. Second, tehsil Dir, being my native area, was convenient and feasible for starting my research. Third, tehsil Dir is the administrative zone of the district due to which its population is comparatively heterogeneous compared to other areas of the district.

Dir Lower

Dir Lower is the lower part of the old Dir district. Dir Lower and Dir Upper share a similar social and cultural set-up because both areas were ruled by a single ruler for decades. Dir Lower is considered one of the most sensitive areas in Pakistan in term of religious extremism because the Tehrik Nipaze Shariat (TNS) movement (a movement for the implementation of Sharia in Pakistan) started from this region. It strongly supported the Talibanization of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

I conducted my fieldwork in the village of Chakdara in the tehsil Adenzai of Dir Lower. Although, it was dangerous because of its close borders with the sensitive

¹⁹A tehsil (or tahsil, tahasil, taluka, taluk, taluq, and mandal) is a unit of government in some countries of South Asia. Generally, a tehsil consists of a city or town that serves as its *headquarters*, possibly additional towns, and a number of villages. As an entity of local government, it exercises certain fiscal and administrative power over the villages and municipalities within its jurisdiction. It is the ultimate executive agency for land records and related administrative matters. The tehsil is the second-lowest tier of local government in Pakistan; each tehsil is part of a larger *Zila* (district). Each tehsil is subdivided into a number of local government units called Union councils comprised of a number of towns or villages. In the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan, tehsil has the same meaning as explained above except for the Malakand Division. In Malakand Division, a district (*Zila*) has two or more subdivisions and a subdivision has two or more tehsils. A subdivision in Malakand Division is about the same as a tehsil in the rest of the country. The chief official of a tehsil is called the *tehsildar* or *talukdar*. See <http://dictionary.babylon.com/tehsil/>, accessed June 3, 2010.

(Taliban dominated) areas of Swat and Bajaur Agency, as it was close to Dir Upper (my home town), it was convenient for me to access it on a daily basis. The University of Malakand where I worked as a lecturer for five years is situated in Chakdara and it was therefore easy for me to find respondents there. Further, Chakdara is the centre for the surrounding districts. This makes its social environment diverse and heterogeneous. Hence its relative safety, its heterogeneous population and easy access to the respondents were the main reasons for its selection.

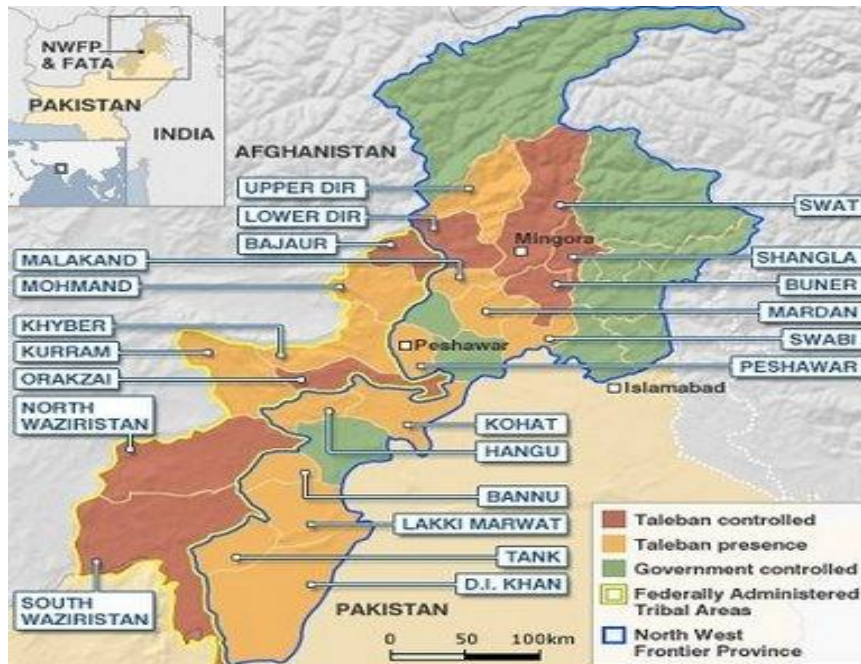
Peshawar

The district of Peshawar is the capital of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province. Pakhtuns are the dominant population of the Peshawar district with Hindko people in a minority. It has boundaries with the Khyber Agency to the west, the Mohmand Agency to the northwest and Orakzai Agency to the south. At the north side it has boundaries with the district Charssada and to east side is district Nowshera. People from different cultural backgrounds, religious sects, of diverse socio-economic status and different political ideologies reside here. In Peshawar I selected Palosi, a village, and Madina town for my research. Due to its close proximity to tribal areas and its congested nature Peshawar witnessed a high number of terrorist attacks in 2009. Here again I adopted the same strategy and selected areas which were relatively peaceful, easily accessible and where concerns for my personal safety were at a minimum. It is important to mention here that the time when I was conducting my fieldwork (September to November, 2009) was relatively challenging because of the Taliban uprising and hostile environment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Working in a hostile environment

According to Craig et al. (2000) a number of situations arise in the context of social research, where one's safety might be at stake. For example, Seale et al. (2004) argue that research in a hostile and unstable social environment raises concerns about the fieldworker's safety and security, while Lee (1993) suggests that in such a situation a sensitive topic might provoke people and can make it difficult and unsafe for researchers. After the 9/11 incident, Pakistan became involved in the war against terror which turned it into a battlefield. This war wrecked its internal security as well as undermining the political, economic and social situation of Pakistan (Qureshi 2010). Pakistan has been paying both in blood and in treasure in this war (Zaidi 2010). The Economic Survey 2010-11 estimates a total loss of \$68 billion borne by Pakistan while becoming an ally in the US-led war against terrorism. Similarly, the Economic Survey 2009-10 reports a total of 8,141 incidents of terrorism in Pakistan, causing 8,875 deaths of both civilians and law enforcement personnel and 20,675 people injured (Haider 2011). The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, being close to terrorist strongholds, FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Afghanistan, was often under attack from militants. The majority of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa such as the districts Swat, Bunner, Dir Lower, Shangla, Bajawar and some settled areas of the Peshawar and Mardan districts were under military operation against insurgents (Taliban) as shown in Figure 3 at the time when I conducted my research. Moving around Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa was extremely dangerous and insecure when I visited it in 2009.

Figure 3. Map of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province showing the areas under the control of the Taliban, the presence of the Taliban and government.



Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/8046577.stm, accessed August 10, 2009.

There was an increasing sense of insecurity among the people as panic affected daily life, economic activities and caused anxiety among people (Rana 2009). Large numbers of suicide attacks in public places and on security agencies were happening on a routine basis and out of a total of 168 terrorist attacks in Pakistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa was hit 89 times in 2009 (Manzoor 2009; Khan 2009). Further, kidnapping for ransom was very high because of the fragile government in the tribal areas and peripheries (The News International 2010). The majority of police and security agencies were employed to ensure the security of government officials due to which the insurgents could easily penetrate the settled areas. The issue of public security was exacerbated when large numbers of police resigned from their duties due to threats of kidnapping and killing of them and their family members by the extremists (Yusufzai 2009). In this situation the villages created their own volunteer

defending force called '*Lakhkar*' or '*Lashkar*',²⁰ supported by the government, to make arrangements for their security. In our village the elders decided to take one person from each household to form a *Lakhkar* of around 40 persons who patrolled the village at night time. The majority of main roads were under military control and there was strict checking at military checkpoints. The long curfew hours on the main roads (sometimes for days) were also one of the issues in moving around the province. These main roads were the main links because the alternative roads were not safe. I still remember the day when I was stuck in a curfew and had to stay inside a coach for 8 hours without food or drink. Working in such an unstable and hostile environment was a great challenge for me when carrying out my fieldwork.

Working in hostile environments requires thoughtful planning, anticipating the issues that may happen during fieldwork and developing a strategy how to respond to these situation (Seale et al. 2004) Not only is the researcher's safety in danger but getting quality data also becomes difficult and challenging. The British Sociological Association (2002) stresses that safety issues need to be considered in the design and conduct of social research projects, and procedures should be adopted to reduce the risk to researchers. In order to get quality data and also to maximize my safety I selected to research in areas which were relatively peaceful, convenient to access and where I had relatives, friends or other kinds of acquaintances. In case of a long journey (from Dir to Peshawar and vice versa or from Dir Upper to Dir Lower) I always used public transport and went in the company of other people also travelling there. During my travels I told my family and friends where I was and when I would

²⁰ *Lakhkar* is a volunteer armed party which goes out from a village or tribe for warlike purposes and has to maintain the tribal order in Pakhtun society. The *Lakhkar* may consist of a hundred to several thousand men. The decisions of a Jirga, if violated by a party, are enforced through a tribal *Lakhkar*. The *Lakhkar* thus performs the functions of the police in the event of a breach of tribal law and to maintain the order. See <http://www.khyber.org/culture/pashtunwali.shtml#Lashkar>, accessed May 12, 2010.

arrive or return. I tried to meet my interviewees during day-time and in public places.

Seale et al. (2004) describe that researchers working in hostile environments have to adapt to and act in a way shared by other people. Since Pakhtun areas are unstable and people always carry arms when they leave their home because anything may occur at any time, being a Pakhtun I complied with the prevalent traditions and patterns and made arrangements for my security. I used to carry a pistol with a licence whenever I went into the field, especially when conducting interviews in the peripheries. This is, of course, not a common practice among western researchers or men of any western culture but in Pakhtun society it is considered normal for a man to carry a weapon because one has to take care of one's security and cannot rely on the corrupt and incompetent security system of the country.

Identifying the study participants

Mason (1996: 86) highlights that social researchers usually make use of certain features (either biological or social or both of these) of people for classification, sampling and analytic purposes such as occupation, ethnicity, income, age, sex, education, religion, ideology, income, etc. Thus in each of the four selected areas I identified participants on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, education and age.

I used ethnicity as the first criterion to identify the study participants. I selected Pakhtuns because it is the largest ethnic group of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. There are different *Khels* and *sub-Khels* (ethnic and sub-ethnic groups) of Pakhtuns but one thing is common among them; they all practise Pakhtunwali and

their tribal traditions. The second criterion for the identification and selection of respondents was their gender. I selected men for the purpose of my study because, as indicated before, for me as a male researcher it was not possible to get access to women in our society. A different study involving access to women might have been revealing in different ways but I could not interview women unknown and unrelated to me.

Age was used as the third criterion for the selection of my participants. The respondents were divided into two age groups. One included men aged 20 to 35 and the other men aged 36 to 50 years. The men in the first age group (20 to 35) were young men, usually in their early stages of establishing matrimonial life. The second age group comprised of men with an established family structure. The men in this age group are the key decision-makers regarding family matters such as marriages, education, careers etc. I wanted to explore the views of the respondents in both age groups as both are at different life stages with different experiences and attitudes. Choosing respondents on the basis of two age groups revealed significant differences in attitudes towards masculinity construction, power structures and domestic violence against women as I shall show in my analytical chapters.

The interviewees were also selected on the basis of their educational status as literate and illiterate. The term literate here means persons who have some kind of basic education and includes both those who could at least read as well as those who had a high degree of educational qualifications. The views of literate men are important because they are more exposed to modern technology, have access to written information, know more than illiterates about the legal structures and also religious texts, both of which are important for the regulation of people's behaviour and thus domestic violence. Similarly the views of illiterate men about masculinity

and domestic violence are significant in the context of Pakhtun society, because they constitute the majority in the country side and firmly believe in sustaining and practising patriarchal structures.

A total of 32 male respondents were interviewed on the basis of two broad categories, i.e. (i) age group—one category ranging from 20 to 35 years and the other from 36 to 50 years, (ii) educational status—literate and illiterate. In each of the four areas two respondents were selected in each of the age group and educational category as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by age and education in each of the four areas.

Age group+ Literate		Age group+ Illiterate	
20—35 Years	35—50 Years	20—35 Years	35—50 Years
2	2	2	2
Total = 8 respondents in each area = 32 total respondents in four areas.			

Finding the interviewees

Finding suitable interviewees was an extremely arduous task in each of the four selected areas. Usually Pakhtuns (educated as well as uneducated) are not familiar with, and feel nervous of, participating in academic activities. Further, the issue of uncertainty and mass unrest due to the unstable political situation of the region as well as the sensitive and (conceptually) difficult nature of my research topic made it hard to get the respondents to understand the topic in order to get their consent. To overcome this problem I devised a plan and contacted some of my relatives and friends in each of the selected areas, of whom I was anticipating support and help in

finding suitable respondents. Pakhtun society is strongly organized along family, neighbourhood and friendship networks and one commonly makes use of these networks to get what one needs.

So I initially contacted friends and relatives (all male of course). I explained the purpose and aim of my research to them and requested their help in finding other men to interview. The use of snowballing throughout my research process was quite productive for getting access to desired informants. Snowballing as discussed by Bryman (2008: 184) 'is useful to identify respondents in cases when there is no accessible sampling frame for the population from which the sample can be taken'. Denscombe (2003: 16) suggests that with snowballing 'the sample emerges through a process of reference from one person to the next and thus each respondent in this process, on the basis of his experience, nominates other(s) who are relevant for the research'. I usually asked each interviewee for help in finding another respondent by using his links. I found this strategy extremely helpful because a person who already had the experience of being interviewed could often convince his friend/relative to participate by referring to his experience as well as the context, theme and nature of the interview.

Interviewing men

Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003) and Oliffe and Mroz (2005) have documented a number of issues a researcher might face while interviewing men. Oliffe and Mroz (2005: 257) argue that 'it can be a daunting task, especially when two men, who are often strangers, agree to talk about ordinarily private matters'. This was certainly the case for me since violence against women, for example, is not considered a topic of

potential conversation among men in my culture. The topic itself could put men off participating in my research. Thus drawing on the experience of Oliffe and Mroz (2005) one effective way of finding and interviewing potential research participants was through the use of my friends', colleagues' and family's networks. However, it was often difficult for me to explain my research to the men I interviewed. For one thing, not only illiterate but also literate men knew very little about research, its purpose and uses. Oliffe and Mroz (2005) suggest that when interviewees do not express their thoughts and emotions, it may be because of their perceived threat to their masculine self or due to a lack of understanding, the interview may yield only superficial data or may over before it starts. In this regard Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003) and Oliffe and Mroz (2005) suggest some useful strategies for the interviewer, which I found really helpful. For example, in case of talking with some of my silent and non-expressive respondents the use of a sequence of three interview techniques, i.e. prompts, probes and loops (see e.g. Oliffe and Mroz (2005: 259) proved helpful in the generation of data.

At the same time it was morally and ethically obligatory for me as a researcher to make the interviewees aware of why I needed their participation and views (see e.g. British Sociological Association Guidelines 2002). I adopted a common strategy to make the respondents, both illiterate and literate, understand my topic and get their consent by saying that I was researching Pakhtun society, its gender structure and family issues and conflicts. It is important to note here that the issue of domestic violence against women in Pakhtun culture is viewed as family issues or family conflicts. I therefore did not use the term domestic violence against women while

getting the consent of my interviewees because I thought it would confuse (as well as embarrass) my interviewees and hence used the term family conflicts.

Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003: 56) argue that ‘how men answer questions and how they behave in an interview are potentially valuable sources of data when the researcher has to deal with gender or topics related to gender’. However, all men do not behave in the same way, particularly in relation to (sensitive) topics (as in the case of this study) concerning their masculine self – ‘to open oneself to interrogation is to put oneself in a vulnerable positions’ (Schwalbe and Wolkomir 2003: 59)–, because they may feel it a threat to their masculine image (Schwalbe and Wolkomir 2003: 57-58). However, due to our shared gender and cultural basis I found that all my interviewees talked relatively openly on the matter of gender disparity, its causes and the conditions under which men resort to domestic violence against women. This may partly have been because they did not question masculinity itself.

Arrangements of the time and place for interviews

After the respondents consented I agreed a time and place for the interview with them. I was aware of the fact that a suitable time and place for the interview as argued by Denscombe (2003: 173) plays a significant role in conducting a good interview. I therefore always tried to select locations which offered privacy, which had fairly good acoustics and which were reasonably quiet. I found restaurants, a *Hujra* or *Betak*²¹, offices and public parks to conduct the interviews.

²¹ A Hujra is a common sitting or sleeping place for males in the village. The Hujra represents the sociable character of Pakhtuns and plays a pivotal role in their daily life. It serves as a club,

Figure 4. A Betak.

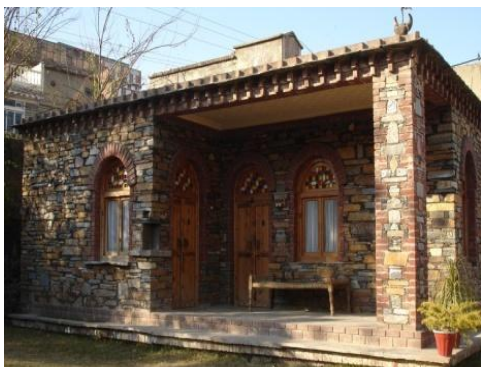


Figure 5. A Hujra.



Source: Photo by Khurshaid. Available at: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/6162948>, accessed August 19, 2010.

Sometimes it was embarrassing when I reached the place of interview and found the respondent absent. In such a situation the respondents either used to come late with the excuse of urgent work or promised another time for interview after long telephone contact. Sometimes it was really hard to gauge whether such delaying tactics from the respondents indicated their refusal or their lack of interest. Under such conditions I had to make another arrangement after trying to understand their way of acting. However, I also sometimes found the respondents eagerly waiting for the interview. Hospitality is one of the basic features of Pakhtuns and being a Pakhtun I often served my interviewees either dinner, lunch or tea when the interview was going to take place in a restaurant but when the interview was in the Hujra or Betak of the interviewees it was almost impossible for me to start the interview before accepting their hospitality.

dormitory, guest house and a place for ritual and feast. It is a centre for social activities as well as a council hall for the settlement of family and inter-tribal disputes through the Jirga. Guests and strangers are fed and sheltered free of charge in the village Hujras. In some places the Hujra happens to be the property of one man (Village Khan or Malak) but in tribal areas it is often the common property of the whole village. The function of the Hujra and Betak is almost the same but the latter is small in size and the property of a single person or family. Presently in Pakhtun culture the Hujra has been replaced by Betaks and every house has a Betak.

There were extraneous issues such as noise and the presence of others which acted as obstacles to the interview process. In several interviews I experienced the interference or presence of other people as unsettling to the process of the interview. During one interview in the office of the interviewee, for example I had to stop the interview and recording several times when somebody entered or the telephone or mobile rang. Before starting the interview I used to try to make sure that there was minimum interference from other people like waiters in restaurants and family members of the interviewees. I often switched off my mobile in front of my interviewees, in order to suggest to them to turn off their mobiles so as to make the situation conducive to our exchange. Sometimes I had to convince the interviewees not to attend to the mobile or to switch it off before the start of the interview.

Introduction and starting the interviews

I designed a general interview protocol as suggested by Creswell (2003) which contained a heading and explained the key research questions to the interviewees (see Appendix II). After making the necessary arrangements for a suitable and quiet place, asking permission to record the discussion and assuring the confidentiality of the information I then opened the interview with a general discussion—of either the political situation of the province or gender issues or business matters—depending on the social background of the interviewee. This strategy was useful because it helped the respondent to built confidence and trust. It also gave me the opportunity to gauge his views. After a short general conversation I then turned the discussion towards my topic by explaining the purpose of my research.

I always opened the interview with simple questions in order to give the interviewee a chance to speak with confidence and to settle down. As the interview proceeded I had to narrow down the discussion towards my topic. Usually it took quite a while to get the respondents, both literate and illiterate, to understand the concepts of masculinity, femininity and domestic violence because these are differently conceived and expressed in Pakhtun culture (see introduction chapter). The interviews took around an hour. Sometimes the respondent's facial expression, style of discussion and reply to the question showed his tiredness which was actually a sign to finish the interview. I then thanked him for having given up his time to participate in the interview.

Recording of the interviews

According to Denscombe (2003: 175) 'recording (video or audio) is the standard method of capturing interview data because human memory is unreliable, prone to partial recall, bias and full of errors'. Recording provides a permanent record of the talk that occurs during interview. I used an MP4 Player to record the interviews. I also maintained a field diary to keep a record of the non-verbal communication and other contextual factors as well as of what was not recorded during the interview process.

Before starting the interviews I asked the interviewees for their consent regarding the audio recording of the interview by arguing that it was difficult for me to capture and memorize all the discussion. I also assured them that the recording would only be used for academic purposes. All the respondents were very flexible and some of them even asserted that they wanted their actual names to be mentioned in the data.

However, I always preferred to comply with the ethical guidelines and used pseudonyms in order to preserve the interviewees' anonymity.

I fully agree with Denscombe's (2003: 177) arguments that 'the process of recording has a bearing on the freedom with which people speak, and the visual appearance of the equipment serves to remind informants of the fact that they are being recorded'. I observed that sometimes during the outset of the interview the interviewees felt shy and nervous in the presence of recording equipment but as the interview proceeded they increasingly became less conscious of its presence. The use of a portable MP4 Player in this regard was quite helpful because of its small size, quiet recording and long battery hours. Each time, before starting the interview and even during the interview, I made certain of the performance and recording of the MP4 player in case the equipment failed.

Use of vignettes

Finch (1987) argues that when the subject matter is sensitive as it was in this study, there is the possibility that the respondents may feel that they are being judged by their replies and also that the questions may make them suspicious. Men are usually hesitant to talk openly about sensitive matters and can mislead the interviewer by giving false information when they consider it a threat to their masculine self because 'to open oneself to interrogation is to put oneself in a vulnerable position and thus to put one's masculinity further at risk' (Holstein and Gubrium 2003: 59). Women's issues are highly sensitive and considered extremely private in Pakhtun society. Pakhtun culture condemns violence against women (mostly physical) and

those who assault their women are in theory considered cowards (*Beghyerath*) and acting against Pakhtunwali. However, domestic violence in all shapes prevails in Pakhtun society but both women and men and also other family members do not discuss and disclose this to others, due to the associated cultural taboo and shame (Khan and Hussain 2008). For me it was extremely difficult to discuss issues pertinent to women, for example to ask the interviewees about their matrimonial relationships and other family matters, especially about committing violence against their wives in a blunt manner because it would have probably made the interviewees uneasy.

I therefore used the vignette technique to understand men's views regarding domestic violence in Pakhtun society. According to Bryman,-‘

this involves presenting respondents with one or more scenarios and then asking them how they might respond when confronted with the circumstances of that scenario. The fact that the questions are about other people permits a certain amount of distance between the questions and the respondents and results in less threatening contexts and also reduces the possibility of an unreflective reply’- (Bryman 2008: 246).

At the very start of the interview I told the interviewees that I would present them with some stories about domestic violence and would ask their opinion about the incidents and the characters involved. The vignettes were framed in such a way as to portray a plausible picture as well as cover particular instances of domestic violence (see Appendix III). All the interviewees made very interesting and different

comments on each story. I also asked the interviewees to tell me similar stories of domestic violence if they happened to know or have come across them.

The experience of using vignettes was very useful because it yielded some interesting information. The majority of my respondents took keen interest in these made-up stories and talked very openly regarding the sensitive (women's) issues presented in these vignettes (see Chapter 4). Some of my interviewees even told me their insider (family) stories while giving their views on these vignettes. However, two of the respondents urged not to use their family stories as part of my data. In order to be in line with the ethical considerations of the BSA (British Sociological Association 2002) I therefore did not use that material for which my respondents had not given their consent.

Ethical concerns

Research can have a very powerful impact on people's lives. Therefore a researcher must always be careful about the impact of his/her research, so that no harm comes to the subject of the research (McNeil and Chapman 2005: 12). People with whom a social scientist conducts his research have rights and that researcher has responsibilities to their research subjects (British Sociological Association 2002). In other words, ethics and moral principles must guide the research process. I was aware of the fact that Pakhtuns are highly sensitive to gender issues because women in Pakhtun culture are considered a symbol of *ghyerath* (honour). Therefore I was extremely tactful in my discussion of domestic violence issues with the interviewees. The British Sociological Association (2002) has framed some general ethical guidelines for social researchers (see <http://www.britisoc.co.uk>). Some of

these, according to Mason (1996), can be anticipated in advance but sometimes the researcher makes intellectual and practical decisions on the spot to observe his/her moral and ethical obligations. While interviewing my older respondents I being a youngster and because of respect used to call them not by their actual names but either by 'lala' or 'Khan gee'. Similarly, I did not ask them bluntly about their relationship and treatment with their wives at home.

It is important to gain informed consent from the research participant by explaining what the research is about. 'The people participating in the research activity should know that research is being carried out and how the results will be used so that they can make an informed choice as to whether they want to take part' (McNeil and Chapman 2005: 12). In western sociological research researchers usually gain informed consent by using a consent form signed by the research participants. But in South Asian countries and specifically in Pakistani society such practices are not prevalent. In Pakhtun society usually people believe in oral commitments and prefer to give oral consent. Also the illiterate respondents who often use their thumbprint as their signature in Pakhtun society might have felt suspicious of the research process if I had asked them to sign a paper they could not read. Therefore I asked for oral consent from the respondents.

The majority of my interviewees were not aware of their rights in research situations concerning how the data would be used and how such information could either benefit or harm them. Before starting to interview I assured the informants that the data would be used for academic purposes only. I also made the interviewees understand that they had the right to withdraw their opinions. The interviewees trusted me and agreed to the data use in whatever way was appropriate for me. I did not try to establish friendships with my respondents based on deception in order to

manipulate data out of them. I told them openly about the questions to be asked in the interview. McNeil and Chapman (2005) argue that respondents often reveal more about their personal and private matters when their confidentiality is assured. Each respondent was told that the interview would be recorded and it was promised that it would not be open to others without their consent. During the process of transcription and data analysis I used pseudonyms in order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Throughout the research process I tried to monitor myself and observe ethical guidelines. I did not ask questions regarding sensitive issues in a blunt way because I knew that this could make the interviewees uncomfortable. The majority of the respondents answered freely and without hesitation to the questions except one illiterate respondent who said not to ask questions pertaining to religion (Islam), stating that he did not know anything about the Qur'an and Hadith.

Power relations and the issue of being an insider/outsider—reflexivity

Bryman (2008) suggests that the power relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is complex, multidirectional and can influence the data generation process. I tried to establish a balanced power relationship with my interviewees. For example, throughout my research activity I always fixed the time and selected the place for interview with mutual consent from the respondents. I always tried to develop an informal and easy atmosphere so that the interviewee would not feel that they were only research subjects providing me with the information. I tried not to become judgemental and I did not challenge the informant's viewpoints unless they asked for guidance and discussion. The relatively comfortable manner of the

interviews made the respondents confident to talk with me particularly in relation to their matrimonial and family relationships.

However, the power relationship between me and the interviewees to some extent was influenced by my changing position as insider and outsider in the research process. In many ways I was an insider. I am a man and belong to the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, I am a Pakhtun, I speak Pakhto, I have an understanding of Pakhtun traditions and the social environment as I was brought up in a Pakhtun family. I was in the same age group as one set of respondents, those aged 20 to 35 years. In Pakhtun culture men of the same or nearly the same age group can freely exchange their views compared to talking with people from different age groups. I am literate as one group of respondents was. I have the same religion and dress code as the majority of the respondents had. My insider identity was important and played a vital role in gaining trust among the respondents which was essential for the data generation.

But I was also an outsider in many ways. I was more highly qualified than many of the respondents. I was pursuing higher education abroad and was a government officer (lecturer in a public sector university). I have a more critical attitude than some of the respondents towards Pakhtun culture and society. There was also a difference in my age from the respondents in the older age group. In Pakhtun culture older people (*masharan*) are highly revered by younger ones (*kasharan*). One of my respondent groups (35 to 50 years) consisted of older men and I was very careful in discussing sensitive issues with them. The use of vignettes was particularly helpful here in trying to get information on private matters. Throughout the interview process I tried to foreground my insider identity over the outsider one by adapting to

the local culture, for example talking in the local dialects and behaving according to Pakhtun traditions so that the interviewees considered me as someone belonging to them. I thought this necessary so that I could gain useful data.

Scholars consider reflexivity essential in social research (Watt 2007; Gilgun 2010). According to Gilgun (2010: 1), 'reflexivity is the idea of awareness—that researchers are reflexive when they are aware of the multiple influences they have on research processes and on how research processes affect them'. Thus reflexivity entails the giving of a full and honest account of the research process as well as an explanation of the researcher's position in relation to informants and to their views (Reay 1996: 443). 'Reflexivity is both an ethical issue in regard to clients as well as an accountability issue in terms of quality' (Gilgun 2010: 7). In reviewing my research, I realize now that on many occasions I had an imbalanced power relation with certain of my informants which may have influenced my data. My tendency was, for example, to act in accordance with the prevailing cultural norms such as being very respectful towards certain respondents who were older than me, due to which I did not ask forthrightly about their personal lives and their treatment of women. I knew that sometimes some of my older and educated respondents were misrepresenting things or exaggerating points in males' favour. But being a junior it was often difficult for me to be openly critical of their views or to question what they said.

However, I had a much more dominant position in relation to my illiterate, rural, and younger respondents because of being educated. As a result they would sometimes feel inferior, were hesitant, and would not comment very openly and say 'you know better' or 'I cannot say because you know everything'. Sometimes they also

struggled to understand the question or the issue, and would ask if I could elaborate the question or make them understand. I then had to explain certain concepts, e.g. masculinity, patriarchy, gender, etc to them and would encourage them to speak by emphasizing that I was interested in how they interpreted and saw things. However, I found that regarding women's issues, considered highly personal and private in Pakhtun culture, all of my respondents were often reticent to talk about them.

The use of vignettes allowed me to talk relatively more openly with them. It also provided some of my older respondents with the opportunity to give more open accounts about the sensitive issue of domestic violence. My knowledge of Pakhtun culture and in particular the treatment of women may also have resulted in my anticipating certain responses rather than enabling respondents to produce divergent views. However, overall and given the specificity of my research I still think that my position as an insider was an asset rather than a liability since I do not think that an outsider would have found it easier to generate the data I managed to collect. The process of reflexivity cannot be exhaustive (Pini 2004; Valentine 2002). But throughout the entire research process I tried to be aware of and reflexive about my personal and the informants' viewpoints.

Transcribing and translating the interviews

The transcriptions and translation were done after all the interviews were completed because it was difficult to manage both interviewing and transcribing in a short period of time. However, during my field work I transcribed a couple of interviews and shared them with my supervisor via email in order to get her feedback on these. The process of transcription took me almost 3 months after I had conducted all the

interviews. I agree with Denscombe's (2003) observation that transcription is a laborious job because it requires both time and effort and can involve different problems; however, it is a very valuable part of the research because it brings the researcher close to the data (Ercikan 1998; Birbili 2000). The process of transcription is demanding since it requires the researcher to produce verbatim scripts of what was said in the interviews (Du Bois et al. 1993).

There are a number of logistical and interpretive challenges involved in the process of transcribing the recorded speech into textual form and producing a verbatim account of the speech (Poland 2003; Oliver et al. 2005). As English is not my first language, I sometimes found it very hard to make a verbatim translation of the interviews. To overcome this issue and to convey the flavour of the original talk to the readers I had to consult my colleagues and friends to help me translate the (contextual) and general meanings of certain terms and proverbs from Pakhto to English. Vulliamy (1990: 66) argues that transcribing research data from one language to another has a direct impact on the data when the researcher has less knowledge of the language and culture of the people under study. Fortunately I did not face this problem because of my background in the culture where I carried out my research. I conducted all the interviews in Pakhto. Pakhto is the mother tongue of Pakhtuns but the majority of educated Pakhtuns can understand, speak and write Urdu as well. I translated the interview guide into Pakhto and Urdu.

Pakhto like all languages carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings and values that were difficult to translate into the grammatical and syntactical structure of the English language. In Pakhto the use of metaphor and proverbs is very common. These have specific cultural meanings, for example, *da nar zyve pata pa wrane ke lage* (a brave child can be recognized in his early childhood), *da kale oza kho ka*

narkha ma oza (one can abandon one's village but not one's customs), *da tarboor ghakh pa tarboor matege* (A cousin's tooth breaks on a cousin's)²², etc. It was really hard to make a word by word translation of certain Pakhto proverbs into English because often these were specific to particular areas for example, *hala ba khabar she che taro jaba la warshe* (you will know and realize it when you reach it—(taro jaba)—a place near Peshawar), *che zeee zeee zeee no abazo la ba raze* (wherever you go, you will finally come to abazo—a place near Chakdara, district Dir Lower). However, I tried to provide both a translation and an explanation of these where it was appropriate. I also used footnotes to provide a plausible explanation for some of the concepts and terms specific to Pakhtun culture and particular localities.

Birbili (2000) argues that 'when two languages do not offer direct lexical equivalence,' researchers and linguistics then suggest to aim for conceptual equivalence and the comparability of meanings (Temple 1997: 610; Birbili 2000). Sechrest et al. (1972) argue that this process is greatly facilitated by the researcher's understanding of the language and intimate knowledge of the culture. This, according to Birbili (2000), 'enables the researcher to pick up the full implications that a term carries for the people under study and make sure that the cultural connotations of a word are made explicit to the readers of the research'. As Denscombe argues (2003: 184), 'transcription is not a mechanical process of putting audio recorded talk into written sentences. The talk needs to be "tidied up" and edited a little to put it in a format on the written page that is understandable to the reader. Inevitably, it can lose some authenticity through this process'. Bryman (2008: 455) notes that sometimes some portions of the interviews are not very useful because of the interviewees' irrelevant replies to your questions. For this kind of

²² See <http://www.khyber.org/Pakhtolanguage/Pakhtoproverbs.shtml>, accessed on June 5, 2010.

data Bryman suggests the omission of such data. Drawing on Bryman and Descombe's arguments I omitted the data I thought was irrelevant. However, before doing this I used to listen to it several times in order to ensure it was of no use. Throughout the process of transcription I added punctuation and gave a sentence structure to the talk so that its written form could make sense to the readers. In general, I tried to be faithful to what was actually said in the interview. Overall, the process of transcription and translation, although very boring, brought the talk to life again because I gave it a textual form and prepared the data for their subsequent analysis (Poland 2003).

Data analysis

The process of transcription gave the data a more organized form which according to Denscombe (2003) and Creswell (2003) is an important stage of qualitative data analysis. Certain interesting themes emerged during the process of transcription. I found that the majority of respondents had produced similar ideas and opinions about certain issues and questions I had asked. Three major themes emerged to which I added sub-themes. Each of the major themes became a heading of one of my analysis chapters. These were a) 'Masculinity as ideal and reality in Pakhtun society,' b) 'Family structure and domestic violence against women in Pakhtun society', and c) 'Spatialization and domestic violence in Pakhtun society'.

As it was my first time to deal with qualitative analysis, I had no idea of what computer programme to use. Later on I came to know about certain computer packages such as *ATLAS.ti* (<http://www.atlasti.com>) but it was time-consuming to learn and use it. Obviously I had no option but to discuss this issue with my

supervisor. She suggested using the Word processing packages (document) programme which I found more convenient and useful. Denscombe (2003: 275) also recommends the Word processing packages. However, here too I went through a series of troubles but finally developed a protocol for the analysis of my data. All the respondents were divided into four categories on the basis of their age (ranging from younger to older) and education such as young illiterate, old illiterate, young literate and old literate. Each category and the respondents falling in these categories from 1 to 8 on the basis of their age were given a code as shown in the Table 4.

Table 4. Coding and distribution of the respondents on the basis of their age and educational status.

Category of Respondents	Name	Age
Young Illiterate = A		
A1	Omar Khan	25
A2	Noor Ullah	26
A3	Nadar	28
A4	Waris Khan	31
A5	Misthre Khan	32
A6	Watan	33
A7	Sardar	33
A8	Gul Mohammad	34
Old Illiterate = B		
B1	Gul Amin	37
B2	Janullah	41
B3	Faqir Mohammad	43
B4	Rasool Khan	44
B5	Khush Dil Khan	47
B6	Ghulam	48
B7	Yar Mohammad	50
B8	Sher Zaman	50
Young Literate = C		
C1	Ibrahim	24
C2	Aatif	26
C3	Naeem	31
C4	Maheeb	32
C5	Haleem	32
C6	Hamid	33
C7	Rahmat Zada	33
C8	Sabir	34
Old Literate = D		
D1	Naeem	38
D2	Altaf	39

D3	Sarzamin	42
D4	Ghafar	43
D5	Farooq	44
D6	Zia Ur Rahman	45
D7	Nasruddin	48
D8	Multan Shah	50

Designed by the author.

As I now had all the transcribed interviews available in the Word package, it was possible to start my next process of data analysis. Each interview was looked at thoroughly for collecting the relevant information concerning a particular theme and marked with a unique code of reference. For the coding I used different kinds of symbols and colours. Coding is useful because it breaks down the data into various categories and units that will be used for the analysis (Denscombe 2003: 271; Bryman 2008). The protocol was applied in Microsoft Word Document 2007, in which against the left side of the page—representing the name of the respondent—I put the relevant data in columns under each theme or question(s) I had asked my interviewees as shown in Figure 6. On the left side of the page I created a separate column in each category of the respondents in order to add comments and summarise my respondents' views as well as to put in some quotes from my respondents which would later be used in the analysis chapters.

Figure 6. A computer screen picture showing the protocol I used in the Microsoft Word Document 2007 for the analysis of my data.

Title of the theme		Comments
A1		
A2		
A3		
A4		
A5		
A6		
A7		
A8		
B1		
B2		
B3		
B4		
B5		
B6		
B7		
B8		
C1		
C2		
C3		
C4		
C5		
C6		
C7		
C8		
D1		
D2		
D3		
D4		
D5		
D6		
D7		
D8		

Designed by the author.

After I completed the process of collecting information regarding particular themes from all of my transcribed interviews and added them in the above mentioned protocol, I moved to the final stage of data presentation and its analysis. All the sub-themes were organized under a major theme, as mentioned earlier, and drafted into different analysis chapters.

In this chapter I have highlighted how I chose my particular qualitative methodology, the reasons for my selecting of certain areas for my fieldwork, and have discussed the designing of a sampling strategy for identifying and finding my study participants. I also indicated some of the challenges and issues I encountered during the course of my field work, during the process of transcription and

translation of the interviews, and during the entire process of data analysis. At the same time I have highlighted the strategies I adopted to overcome these issues and challenges.

In the next three chapters, which are based on the themes that emerged from my data, I deal with three discrete but intertwining factors facilitating the construction of a ‘beleaguered masculinity’ in Pakhtun culture that leads to the perpetration of domestic violence against women. These are ideal notions of masculinity and their lived, reported reality, the family structure, and the notion of spatialization in Pakhtun society.

Chapter 3: MASCULINITY AS IDEAL AND REALITY IN PAKHTUN SOCIETY AND THE ISSUE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Introduction

Pakhtun society has a distinctive gender structure, dominated by males (Caroe 1958; Barth 1959; Spain 1963; Ahmed 1980; Khan and Samina 2009; Khattak et al. 2009). It is articulated through a code of conduct called *Pakhtunwali*—also known as ‘the Pakhtun ideal-type model’ (Ahmed 1980: 89). In Pakhtun culture the symbols of status and dignity include living by ‘*gherat*’ (self honour or dignity) and ‘*Pakhto kaval*’ (‘doing’ of Pakhto), demonstrated through the notions of *nang* (Pakhtun pride, promise or commitment), *namus* (pride or honour of women and land), *badal* (revenge), a strong *malatar* (support or unity of the male family/tribe members), the *hujra* (male guest house), the *topak* (gun), the *jirga* (tribal council or council of elders), and the upholding of dominance in the public sphere (*olase zye*). All of these are exclusively the reserve of males (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1980; Lindholm 1980). Thus it can be argued that Pakhtun society is a man’s world in which there is a constant glorification of machismo and virility (Ahmed 1980). However, as I shall discuss below, this male world consists of complex and contradictory structures, and these put particular pressure on men.

This chapter focuses on Pakhtun masculinity as idealized in the Pakhtun honour code and analyses how my respondents perceived it, expressed by them through the notions of *saritoob* and *narintoob* (manhood behaviour or virility), *gherat* (self

honour and dignity), *badal* (revenge), *nang* and *namus* (pride of women and land), *turzan* or *thuryale* (bravery and confidence) etc. In this, I shall discuss, that although masculinity may be hegemonic in this culture, it is not monolithic but highly stratified and hierarchized. I shall therefore also analyse the hierarchies of masculinity in Pakhtun society and their relationships to power and authority. My main focus is on how masculinity functions in relation to femininity in the context of violence against women. Masculinity in Pakhtun culture is strongly tied to ethnicity. It should be noted in this context that western writers on violent masculinities—except in the case of honour killings—do not tend to relate their notions of masculinity to ethnicity (see e.g. Hearn and Morgan 1990; Connell 1998; Bowker 1998; Alexander 2000; Hatty 2000; Flood et al. 2007; Flood 2009a). However, as I shall elucidate, in the Pakhto context, (hegemonic) masculinity and ethnicity, and hence domestic violence, are closely intertwined.

The point of this chapter then is to analyze the socio-cultural conditions which promote domestic violence in Pakhto culture, and specifically the conditions of masculinity.

Ideal Pakhtun masculinity

Ideal Pakhtun masculinity is embedded in the Pakhtunwali. An ideal Pakhtun is a person who lives by Pakhto or the Pakhtunwali. Ahmed (1980) explains:

Pakhtunwali is the core of Pakhtun social behaviour. Although unwritten and precisely undefined it is the theme of song, proverb, metaphor and parable and never far from men's minds; like most codes it is part-fiction and part-reality (Ahmed 1980: 89).

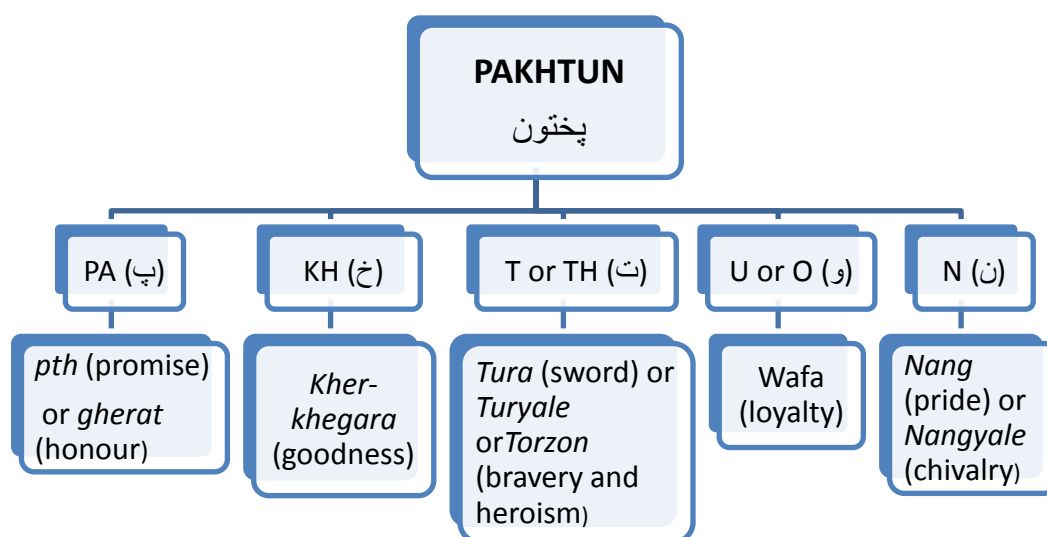
Although over time the Pakhtunwali has become entangled with another ideal type, that of Islam (Boesen 1983: 107), it has also come (very recently) under the influence of modernity and the formal rules of Pakistan (Ahmed 1980). However, gender practices and the articulation of masculinity and femininity (as I shall discuss below) are still very much anchored in the Pakhtunwali, particularly in the production of the structural domination of men over men as well as in the normalization of violence in certain (honour related) situations. Here Islam as a cultural influence gives way to and supports Pakhto. This ideological matrix of Islam and Pakhtunwali is used as a yardstick to assess the *gherat* (self honour or dignity) and Pakhtunness of a person. It is important to note here that Pakhtuns are very particular about their identity and the Pakhtunness or otherwise of others. There is a certain contradiction among writers (native and foreign), which was also evident in the comments made by interviewee about what constitutes an ideal Pakhtun. Therefore I think it is essential to discuss definitions of Pakhtun identity first in order to understand the supposed features of an ideal Pakhtun as well as the social, cultural, political and hierarchal structure of Pakhtun masculinities and its relation to aggression and to femininity. I shall now turn to this.

The definition of Pakhtunness

In a response to my question of who is an ideal Pakhtun, Aatif, one of my younger educated respondents, described the (ideal) features of a Pakhtun through a definition he was taught by his teacher of Pakhto literature when he was in class eight. He said that the term Pakhtun is a combination of five different Pakhto words which is also, in a similar way, described by Ahmed (2006) in her *Sorrow and Joy*

Among Muslim Women: The Pakhtuns of Northern Pakistan. The words are ‘Pu’ or ‘Pa’ (پ) which means ‘pth’ used for promise or *gherat* (honour or enthusiasm); ‘kh’ (خ) which means *Kher-Khegara* (goodness and cooperation); ‘t’ or ‘th’ (ت) which stands for *thura* (sword) or *thuryale* or *torzan* (bravery or chivalry); ‘u’ or ‘o’ (و) which means *wafa* (loyalty and sincerity); and ‘n’ (ن) which stands for *nang* or *nagyale* (pride, competence and chivalry) as shown in the Figure 7.

Figure 7. The literal meaning of the term Pakhtun.



Source: Ahmed (2006: 8), adapted by the author.

My interviewee said: ‘the five different words of the name “Pakhtun” show different features of the Pakhtuns which must be found in a real [ideal] Pakhtun person.’ Thus a Pakhtun according to Aatif is a person who embraces honour, does good to others, is brave, vengeful, and loyal to his land and traditions. This view was echoed by 29 out of 32 of my other respondents. However, they maintained that it was hard to find all these features in existing Pakhtuns. For example, Hamid, one of my younger

educated respondents stated: ‘nowadays it is difficult to find a Pakhtun embodying all the qualities of what Pakhtun actually means.’

Ideally, the features indicated above apply equally to both men and women but in their respective social roles. This means that these features are highly gendered. A man’s *gherat* (honour) which signifies his virility and masculinity, includes, for example, his *namus*—firm control over his woman’s behaviour and sexuality, land and property, his arrangement of provisions for his family, his taking of *badal* (revenge) to defend and protect his and his family honour. A woman’s *gherat* (honour) in contrast is her tolerance, her obedience and servitude towards her husband and her parents (in-law), her observing of *purdah*, taking care of her children and husband’s property and honour. This is what Sardar, one of my younger illiterate respondents, said: ‘The goodness, pride and competence of a person may be expressed, for example, through helping his/her neighbours and relatives in times of need such as sowing, harvesting, loaning money, showing hospitality to guests, and participating in the sorrows and joys (*gham-ao-khadi*)²³ of others’. These views were echoed by the majority of my other respondents. Exercising these qualities therefore means reproducing highly gendered behaviours which support the hegemony of men and the subordination of women in Pakhtun culture.

Pakhtuns use these abstract features as a yardstick to measure the Pakhtunness and *gherat* (honour) of a person. When people from other societies behave in ways that resemble those of Pakhtuns, for example, taking revenge and showing bravery and determination, Pakhtuns admire them as for instance a *nar* (masculine) Punjabi or as a Pakhtun Punjabi. My point here is that the literal meaning of the term Pakhtun is

²³ *Gham* (sorrows) represents tragic events and moments which mainly include deaths, sickness, and other kind of tragedies, while *khadi* (joy) represents moments or events of happiness which include marriages, circumcisions, births, and religious ceremonies like Eids etc.

not enough to define/identify an ideal Pakhtun because these qualities may also be found in men (and women) from other societies. An additional important element in Pakhtun identity is lineage and we need to understand that in order to understand Pakhtun masculinities.

Historical and genealogical definitions of Pakhtuns

The genealogical and historical aspects of the Pakhtuns are important to define and understand the social structure and gender patterns of the Pakhtuns. The lineage system of the Pakhtuns is patrilineal (see e.g. Caroe 1958: 3-42; Ahmed 1980: 129-30). Pakhtuns trace their descent to a putative ancestor Qais Abdur Rashid, of Ghor in Afghanistan. Qais's ancestry is traced to Afghana, hence the name of Afghan, the descendent of Saul, the first king of the Jews. Qais married the daughter (importantly, the only woman indicated in the Pakhtun putative genealogy) of Khalid bin Walid—one of the brave and triumphant commanders of early Islam (Glatzer 1998). It is worth noting, from a gender perspective, that there is no women's history in this Pakhtun putative genealogy. It depicts by implication a long history of ignoring women and their rights in Pakhtun culture. Therefore as Barth (1959: 23) explains: 'A woman has no rights which she could transfer to her children, either in her marital or her natal home; nor does she control any productive resources in Pakhtun society'. Pakhtun society is thus patriarchal (Barth 1959); males are privileged and have authority over females in all situations. This legitimates a certain hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995).

The genealogical information of the Pakhtuns is not verifiable because it is largely based on oral traditions (Caroe 1958; Barth 1959). It may be for this reason that the

issue of Pakhtunness and one's heritage continues to be of great importance to Pakhtuns. For example, one of my younger illiterate respondents, Gul Muhammad, said:

Presently different people not only speak but also practise our Pakhto such as Gujars, Kohistani and Chitrali etc, but it does not mean that they are Pakhtuns. I think only speaking Pakhto and behaving like Pakhtuns is not the criterion to be a perfect Pakhtun. In my view Pakhtuns hold their own *shajara* (pedigree) and a way of life which includes our traditions, behaviours, beliefs and customs which is completely different from Gujars, Kohistanis, Punjabies and other nations.

Some of my respondents (4 out of 32) linked Pakhtun people to Jews. Multan Shah, one of my older educated respondents, made an analogy between Pakhtun behaviours and Jews. He said:

Hmmm...actually we [Pakhtuns] are part of the Jews' tribe and Jews also had rigid behaviours and conservative attitudes like us.

However, the origin of Pakhtun people is still a mystery (see for example <http://www.pakhtun.com>). My interest here is predominantly focused on their present-day identity and the masculine structure that underpins that which is derived from a matrix of both Islam and Pakhtunwali. Lineage is only one way of creating social divisions, and a strong sense of social division, leading to a pronounced sense of 'them' and 'us', and thus fuelling antagonistic stances, is typical of Pakhtun masculinity.

Land and Pakhtuns

One significant source of antagonism between Pakhtun men is land ownership. Some of my respondents, particularly in district Dir lower, linked Pakhtun identity and their hegemony with the holding of land. One of my younger illiterate respondents, Misthre Khan, said:

In our areas those with more property and cultivated land are generally called pure Pakhtuns while those having no or less land are considered either non-Pakhtuns or lower Pakhtuns. They are discriminated against and often treated in a humiliating manner and called sarcastically by their family or caste name such as Chati Khel, Naskoor Khel, *Enger* (blacksmith), *Jola* (weaver), *Kochwan* (muleteer) etc.

It should be noted here that insults and verbal slurs are a source of great humiliation in Pakhtun culture, requiring revenge. In *Political Leadership Among Swat Pathans* Barth (1959) provides an explanation for the social hierarchization in Pakhtun culture (37-40) and the importance of land (*zamin* or *zmaka*) for Pakhtuns. The Pakhtuns living in the Mardan, Peshawar, Charssada, Swabi, Swat and Dir districts largely belong to the Yousafzai tribe of Pakhtuns who came from Kabal, Afghanistan, in the 16th century. They conquered these agricultural lands and expelled or subdued the local populations as tenants and labourers. Land ownership was thus contested and achieved through violence. This remains so today. Since land is a main source of economic and political power in Pakhtun society, it is considered a symbol of social status, a determinant of social hierarchies in Pakhtun society, and imperative for defining the honour (*gherat*) and Pakhtunness of the Pakhtuns (Barth 1969; Ahmed 1976; Lindholm 1979). Lewis (2011) argues that in some Pakhtun areas landlessness can deprive a person of Pakhtun standing.

A Pakhtun then, is a person who has Pakhtun lineage and who practises the Pakhtunwali. Those who genealogically belong but do not practise the Pakhtunwali or those who cannot genealogically be linked to Pakhtuns but through the process of assimilation²⁴ have mixed with Pakhtuns through marital ties and speak as well as practise the Pakhtunwali (for example the Mians, Sayeds, Sahabzadas, and other occupational groups) can be called Pakhtuns but they are generally not considered as *asle* (genuine) Pakhtuns. This is still a popular subject of debate in Pakhtun *Hujras* because Pakhtuns are obsessed with establishing the purity of their Pakhtunness while doubting that of those loosely practising the Pakhtunwali (Barth 1959).

As is evident, being a Pakhtun is defined in terms of a number of criteria including lineage, adherence to the Pakhtunwali, land ownership and behavioural traits. All of these are aspects of Pakhtun hegemonic masculinity. It is this that I turn to now.

The prominent features of Pakhtun masculinity

Pakhtun masculinity was articulated differently by my respondents, for instance through the terms *nar*, *sare* or *narina* and *saree* (man, manly or manly and manhood). However, as already indicated notions such as *gherat* (self dignity and honour), *narintoob* and *saritoob*, also apply to particular forms of femininity in their respective domain and culturally approved ways and roles. For example, Aatif, one of my younger literate respondents, said:

²⁴ Ogburn and Nimkoff (1940) define assimilation as ‘the process whereby individuals or groups once dissimilar become similar and identified in their interest and outlook’ (see <http://www.sociologyguide.com/basic-concepts/Assimilation.php>, accessed 19 September 2011).

In my view the *gherat*, *saritoob* and *narintoob* of men is different from that of women. That is males should not acquire feminine qualities and similarly women should not behave in a mannish manner.

Aatif refers to masculinity and men as distinct from and in opposition to women and femininity. Masculinity for him included uprightness, assertiveness, strength, toughness, aggressiveness, independence, leading and authoritative roles, earning bread and other provisions for the family, taking revenge, and protecting the honour of the family and Pakhtun community. For him this embodied a certain idea of Pakhtun masculinity which also finds expression in very concrete ways.

One of these is the Pakhtun view of the moustache. One of the educated respondents, Hamid Alam, explained: 'Pakhtuns believe that a moustache is a sign of manhood (*narintoob*) and a person shaving his moustache will be raised with women on the day of judgement for making his face like that of a woman. In the old times the cutting or shaving of the moustache was considered a taboo and a person with a shaved moustache was often ridiculed by the elders and peers with phrases like *da zan na ye khaza jora kare da* (has got a feminine face)'. The moustache is a powerful sign of masculinity in Pakhtun culture and the size of a person's moustache supposedly indicates his bravery and machismo. Thus a Pakhtun with a big curvy moustache is generally feared and he is expected to be a tyrant and violent. A man with a big moustache is expected to act in accordance with this symbol of his masculinity, i.e. he must not show cowardice. There is a famous story that once a man with a big moustache asked to be hidden by some women in a *gudar* (water pond) after he was chased by his enemies. The women said to the man that he should not be afraid as he had such a big moustache. The man replied that a moustache is not a gun to fire with. Tellingly and to this day a person with a big

moustache receives a special allowance in the Pakistani army and police services, as it is thought that he will inspire fear and is expected to be particularly brave. It is important to note that the idea of instilling fear is part of a culture which sees aggression as essential to its survival. To instil fear means that you are less likely to be attacked by your rivals, and this agonistic stance is deeply embedded in Pakhtun culture.

On the other hand, hospitality is also highly valued. Some respondents mentioned that an *aslye ao shahe* (perfect or ideal) Pakhtun is recognized by his *melmastob* (hospitality). Omar Khan, a young illiterate respondent, said: ‘a perfect Pakhtun must show hospitality (*melmastia*) to guests’. Along with hospitality some considered righteousness, fairness as well as forgiveness to be typically Pakhtun. Multan Shah, an older literate respondent, said:

Pakhtun....umm....a real Pakhtun in my mind is a person who has a big *Hujra* or *Betak* (dormitory and a common setting place for male guests) and greets the guests, who is tolerant and forgives his opponents when they come to his house or *Hujra*^[25], helps his neighbours, relatives and the needy, speaks and stands by truth and condemns tyrants (*haq ta haq ao batil ta batil owaye*), fulfils his promises and always stands by his words (*lawaz ao jaba porake*).

Some of the respondents reported that an ideal Pakhtun man must be respectful of others, especially relatives and must have the spirit of altruism. Ghulam, an older illiterate respondent, said: ‘the actions of a real Pakhtun man can be recognized from his relation with his relatives because if the relatives respect him, he will also definitely be respected by the community’.

²⁵ In case of conflict, one way to resolve it is for the perpetrator (‘enemy’) to visit the house of the injured party and ask for forgiveness.

Some of the respondents said that an ideal Pakhtun man fulfils his promises in all situations. For instance, Watan Khan, a young illiterate respondent, said: ‘when a Pakhtun man makes a promise (*zaba* or *zuban warke*) he fulfils it in all circumstances such as the promise of giving money, the promise of working and cooperating in harvesting, sowing or threshing the corn and wheat, the promise of alliance and support in conflict etc...’. The latter is an important point because conflict and dealing with conflict were repeatedly mentioned by all my interviewees, indicating how much this is part of everyday life in Pakhto culture. Like many respondents Noorullah, and Hamid for example mentioned that ‘ideal Pakhtuns never conspire and entice other Pakhtuns into conflicts but appease the conflicting parties and strive for reconciliation’. Although this comment was about how to keep peace, the very fact however that conflict was prominently mentioned indicates its rife in this culture.

Honour and revenge are two pronounced and inter-related features of Pakhtun male identity, and they are strongly associated with what one might describe as the management of women, itself indicative of the subordinated role women play. The majority of the respondents (20 out of 32) mentioned that ‘an ideal Pakhtun man must show his *gherat* (honour) and manhood especially in the context of family matters and women’s issues’. One of my younger literate respondents, Rahmat Zada, said: ‘Pakhtuns are careful about the *purdah* and honour of women’. Janullah, an older illiterate respondent, explained: ‘a Pakhtun prefers death rather than compromise his and his family’s honour’. That honour is defended through taking revenge. For instance, in the case of extramarital relations or even just the charge of such relations a man may with impunity (*tor*) decide to kill his wife, daughter or mother in order to avenge himself and preserve his and his family’s honour. Such

impunity which is the object of ‘honour’ research by Welchman and Hossain (2005: 1-24) and Warriach (2005), shows how deeply ingrained the understanding is of the legitimacy of such behaviour in Pakhtun culture.

It also and simultaneously highlights the importance of family. Thus one important aspect mentioned by some of my interviewees was the matter of rivalry within the family and among cousins (*tarboors*). This has to be understood in a context where joint family systems with hierarchized structures of authority among men (as I shall discuss in the next chapter) frequently lead to conflict over for example the distribution of resources or women in a family. As one respondent said: ‘a Pakhtun is always in competition with his *tarboor* (cousin) and cannot bear to be inferior or under the control and authority of his *tarboor*’ (Zia-ur-Rahman, an older literate respondent). Family rivalry is thus one important source of conflict among Pakhtuns.

The ideals that my interviewees mentioned were in many ways at odds with the realities they talked about. I shall turn to these now.

Pakhtun masculinity in reality

Although most of my interviewees had an articulated sense of what ideal Pakhtun masculinity entailed, in reality Pakhtun masculinity is highly contradictory including in relation to the ideals mentioned in the preceding section. As Sardar, a younger illiterate respondent, said:

Practically nobody here follows the Pakhtunwali and religion in its true spirits. Presently our Pakhtuns are involved in every illegal and bad activity such as abduction, killing, smuggling and taking others’ properties.

Several of my respondents took this line, but perhaps not as insistently as Sardar.

Sabir, a younger literate respondent, told me:

Well...in my mind Pakhtuns have certain behaviours which distinguish them from other people and nations. First, they are hasty and don't plan their duties and actions. Second, Pakhtuns are naive, simple and enthusiastic and therefore they are easy to deceive because they blindly believe in rumours and don't investigate the matter. For instance, if somebody tells a Pakhtun that your ear has been taken by a dog he will immediately run after the dog instead of looking to his ear. Third, Pakhtuns are revengeful and aggressive. That is why we have been stereotyped as barbarian, ruthless and warlike. Fourth, Pakhtuns are obstinate, rigid, egoistic and highly emotional whether educated or uneducated, rich or poor and I think when an educated Pakhtun becomes ignorant he in my view is the most dangerous person.

Such views were repeated by the majority (28 out of 32) of my other respondents as well. In practice the concepts of *narintoob* (manish and virility) and *gherat* (honour) were viewed by some as a kind of *jaheltoob* or *Jahelyath* and *zad* (ignorance and rigidity) that shows inflexibility and an inappropriate attachment to outdated traditions. Similarly there is a version of the practice of Pakhto (doing Pukhto—*Pakhto kaval*) that is equated with *jehal* (ignorance) and Pakhtun masculinity in this context can be regarded as *zadi* (obstinate), with a belief in aggression towards other people especially to women as well as the infringement of the code. Typically one of my respondents said:

I think Pakhto is a kind of *Jahelyath* (ignorance) and *zad* (obstinacy) because sometimes our people think that if they do not show hard-headedness and if they do not win over others, they will lose their standing and respect in the community (Omar Khan, a young literate respondent).

Nasruddin, an older educated respondent, stated that people nowadays do not really practise Pakhto because the actual Pakhtunwali is based on sacrifice and promotes goodness and love among people. He said:

In the old times people were happy because there was joint living which promoted the feeling of affection, unity, sacrifice and respect for the elders but now people have become materialistic and selfish. Presently true Pakhtuns are scarce and there is no sincere fraternity among today's Pakhtuns. If you are financially sound then you are the brother of everyone but if you are poor and weak everyone will run away from you and will ridicule you and consider you a burden and a worthless piece (*bekar purza*). In my mind even the love of a mother is contaminated by materialistic and selfish motives and is based on greed. If you can earn and give support to your parents and other family members you will be respected, otherwise you have no respect and honour in the family.

Certain forms of what one might describe as considerate masculinity, such as being kind, or resolving conflicts in non-aggressive ways are not appreciated in Pakhtun culture and one learns to be aggressive, vengeful and exercise absolute control over women in order to live by the notion of *nartoo* (machismo) and *gherat* (honour). An older educated respondent, Altaf, said: 'in our area when a man is polite, courteous, and respects the view of others he is generally considered a coward (*begherat*)'. Rahmat Zada, a young educated respondent, said: 'I think the notion of *gherat* (honour) has made us [Pakhtuns] egoistic, easily roused and less tolerant.' Pakhtun men are brought up to show aggression and be threatening in order to be respected and honoured. Farooq also said: 'Nowadays a man is viewed as a perfect Pakhtun if he can terrorise and harm others and has more strength and (male and economic) power in the community'. The concept of 'honour' (*gherat or namuz*) reflects a man's ability to preserve his autonomy and to protect his respect in the community,

even through violence if needed (Lewis 2011). It is in this sense that a Pakhtun's *gherat* (honour) demands the exacting of vengeance, particularly in relation to issues involving women.

Nearly all my interviewees expressed very biased and rigid attitudes towards women. For instance, one of my younger respondents, Sardar, stated:

Generally speaking our treatment of women is not good because they are thought incompetent, not thoughtful, a worthless thing, a burden on the family in the shape of daughters, a source of conflicts and evils in society, we exchange them like property and treat them like servants or slaves.

Pakhtun culture, as this quote indicates, is very misogynistic. Many of my interviewees talked about women's disobedience. As a consequence of this view, to maintain his manhood and honour (*gherat*) for a Pakhtun involves the notion of being dominant and having full control of his women's behaviour and sexuality. For example, like the majority of other respondents one of the educated interviewee, Rahmat Zada, said: 'women's disobedience is not bearable for Pakhtuns because our *gherat* (honour) is largely tied to our tight control of women.' Naeem Khan, another younger literate respondent, said: 'Pakhtuns' treatment of women [wives] inside the home is very formal and rigid'. In this sense one might say that Pakhtun construction of hegemonic masculinity is at least partly founded on the complete subordination of women. Failure to maintain a subordinate position then justifies violence towards women.

Some of the respondents mentioned that Pakhtuns have discriminatory attitudes not only towards women but also to those men who are less powerful, marginalized and low in the Pakhtun social hierarchal structure. For example:

Pakhtuns in my mind respect their parents and elders but are very harsh and prejudiced towards especially to women and weaker/marginalized (*kamzore*) people (Nadar, a younger illiterate respondent).

All of this suggests that a certain hegemonic Pakhtun masculinity involves domination and, as part of that, aggression to maintain hierarchy both inside and outside of the home. People perceive a man as a 'real' Pakhtun if he is harsh in his treatments, retaliates, sticks to his word whether legal or illegal, is highly egoistic and watches over the movements and purdah of women.

The Pakhtun masculine model, in fact, shows a great contradiction between its ideal and real. From the perspective of male dominance Pakhtun views of masculinity can be seen almost parallel to the 'hegemonic masculinity' model of Connell (1995: 76-86) and the 'patriarchal masculinity' model discussed by Flood (2004: 239), expressed in a patriarchal structure which establishes and maintains men's power and dominance over women and other men low in the hierarchy. Connell (1995: 82) argues that men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, status and the right to command. This is pertinent to the masculine structure of Pakhtun society. In Pakhtun culture to be a 'real man' too requires that one is tough, heterosexual, independent, competitive and dominant just like the ideal masculine features discussed by Flood (1997) in the context of western cultures. But in many ways I think Pakhtun masculinity is different from the other models (mostly western); for instance, it is revengeful, rigid, hasty and emotional, and highly oppressive to women, because of the Pakhto notion of *gherat*. I shall now turn to a discussion of how honour (*gherat*) functions in relation to women and domestic violence.

Pakhtun masculinity and the concept of *gherat* (honour)

Pakhtun men are highly conscious of their *gherat* (honour), *nang* (chivalry) and *namus* (women's honour) and protect them at all costs. A Pakhtun man who fails to maintain his *gherat* is called *begherat* (coward or dishonoured), and in the greater extreme a *dala daus* (effeminate), as Yar Mohammad, an older illiterate respondent, reminded me. Zia ur Rahman, another older respondent but educated, told me that 'if a Pakhtun does not offer hospitality to guests, does not fulfil his *lawaz* or *zaba* (promise and commitment), does not respect parents and elders and does not have control over his women, he is considered a *begherat* (coward) Pakhtun'.

The *gherat* (honour) of Pakhtuns revolves around three main objects: *zan* (women), *zamin* (land) and *zar* (gold or wealth) which trigger the majority of conflicts and enmities in Pakhtun society (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1980; Lindholm 1981; Glatzer 2002). The majority of my respondents, i.e. 30 out of 32, emphasized that the *gherat* (honour) of a Pakhtun is largely linked to his control of his women. For instance Altaf, an older literate interviewee, indicated:

A person has to show manliness to his woman, otherwise people around consider and label you *da khaze mazdor* (a slave of the wife or hen-pecked husband) and a *khazonak* (effeminate) which threatens/jeopardises our *gherat* (honour).

In Pakhtun culture 'real manhood' entails the demonstration of aggressive, formal and rigid attitudes towards women (especially wives). Men who deny or violate this pattern are ridiculed not only by their family members but also by the community and peers. Masculinity and manhood in Pakhtun society is therefore performed for certain audiences including the family and public. Several of my interviewees suggested that sometimes a Pakhtun man has to show aggression to a woman in

order to make her obedient and show his control over her in order to prove his *gherat* to others. Naeem, a younger literate respondent, said:

I am often violent to my wife when she acts disrespectfully towards my parents and other family members, just to show to my mother and brothers that I am *gheratee*, i.e. my wife is under my full control. But inside my bedroom I apologise to my wife and she understands it.

Masculinity here is performed to a particular audience, the wife and the natal family. In the Pakhtun joint family structures where natal families and blood relations are more important than marital ones, a wife is less important to her husband than his mother or sister, and at times of conflict he is expected to side with them rather than with his wife. Violence in intimate relationship is thus ‘particularly reinforced by sexism, the ideology of male supremacy and superiority’ (Gamache 1991: 71). The disobedience of women is regarded as threatening the *gherat* of a Pakhtun man. In many societies, the ideal of heroic masculinity requires acceptance of the notion of honour and the violent regulation of female sexuality (Coomaraswamy 2002). That is why when a woman supposedly transgresses Pakhtun mores, she may become the object of violence.

However, one of my older illiterate respondents, Janullah, gave a different interpretation of the notion of *gherat* (honour). He said:

In my mind *gherat* means speaking the truth and acting correctly and lawfully as well as giving others their due respect and status. I think our *gherat* should be of refusal of outdated customs and useless habits, for instance it is not *gherat* to stop daughters from school or ignore women’s rights regarding marriage and not giving them inheritance, killing and beating women and other people without reason or for trivial issues. In my view this kind of *gherat* (honour) is *Jahelyat* (ignorance).

This view was echoed by several of the educated and more liberal interviewees. Janualla's statement actually represents one extreme, i.e. a liberal one, which is very unusual in reality. His urban living and his exposure to a foreign (Gulf) environment had considerably changed his attitudes towards women and their rights. That is why he criticized the traditional notion of men's *gherat* and equated it with '*jahelyat*', meaning rigidity and conservativeness.

Pakhtun masculinity and the concept of *badal* (revenge)

In Pakhto revenge is called *badal* (revenge) and relates to the expectation that Pakhtuns do not pardon but retaliate. A Pakhtun may murder, abuse and insult in return for perceived wrongs. 'Pakhtuns cannot bear insult and humiliation and take revenge at all cost' (Muhammad Naeem, an older literate interviewee). When a Pakhtun fails to take revenge or when the compensation²⁶ is not equivalent to the worth of the actual damage it becomes a serious threat to the *gherat* of that person. Killing or any insult and misconduct done to women are unforgiveable in Pakhtun culture. Any insult to women brings defamation and disrespect to the affected party and taking revenge is expected in such situations. This often happens in the form of the killing (honour killing) of the wrongdoer, but if the affected party does not avenge himself either by killing, taking *swara* (taking of women in compensation) or through demands for money for compensation, then it defames the family and degrades their dignity as well as questions the Pakhtunness and *gherat* of the

²⁶ The Jirga (council of elders) in Pakhtun culture resolves conflicts and the effected party is often compensated in different ways for instance through money, *swara* and seeking forgiveness (*nanawatee*).

members of that family. My respondents very much confirmed this. One of my older illiterate respondents, Gul Amin, said:

A *nar* (masculine) and *gheratmand* (honourable) *sare* (man) is generally thought as a person who does not tolerate but avenges. Actually we never forgive others but retaliate, otherwise people consider us a *begherat* (coward) which is unbearable and like *zwande marg de* (a living death) for a Pakhtun.

To be a 'real man' is to be vengeful in Pakhtun society. Revenge is taken either by showing the same level of reaction or in the form of compensation. On the one hand this works to ensure the maintenance of a certain form of social justice while on the other it is seen restore masculine hegemony and the honour of the family. In taking *badal* a Pakhtun restores his status in public (Khattak et al, 2009).

One of the effects of this vengeful attitude of the Pakhtuns is that male children are highly preferred to daughters because males are considered the custodians of the Pakhtunwali and a symbol of (economic) power and strength called *malatar* (backbone) in the community. This was referred to by the majority (28 out of 32) of my respondents. For example, a younger literate interviewee, Hamid, said: 'Pakhtuns consider sons as guns and a person or family with more male power has more strength and influence in the community'. In Pakhtun society the social desirability of sons has social and cultural as well as economic reasons. A male child carries the family name. Due to the absence of any welfare state, male children are supposed to support the family and the parents as well as defend the honour of the family and community through taking revenge. It is through the sons who have access to the public sphere that a man can expand his influence within the community and not

through daughters (Shaaban 1998: 114; Abidi 2006). Sons are considered useful in ways that women are not.

Pakhtun masculinity and aggression

Gherat (self honour), *nang* and *namus* (pride and bravery and pride in women's honour), *badal* (revenge), and *narintoob* (manhood) are mostly articulated through direct forms of violence in Pakhtun culture. Pakhtun masculinity is then, basically constructed as an aggressive masculinity. Some of my respondents (17 out of 32) considered aggression as innate to Pakhtuns. For example Naeem Khan, one of the young educated respondents, said:

I think the genetic makeup of the Pakhtuns is entrenched with aggressiveness. That is why we are highly emotional, hasty and vengeful. In my view these qualities are found in both literate and illiterate Pakhtuns. I am an educated Pakhtun and have visited several countries and am quite open but often become emotional and violent too, especially when my wife disobeys me, which I think is not a good habit. Even some of our famous Pakhtun players such as Shahid Afridi, Younas Khan and even Imran Khan were famous for their strict and aggressive behaviours.

Naeem clearly regarded aggression in males in Pakhtun society as innate and hence as something that was 'natural' and could not be changed. His easy admission of being violent towards his wife indicates the extent to which he regarded this as normal even though he also disapproved of it. Women in Pakistani society in general and in Pakhtun society in particular are the sanctioned objects of men's violence, particularly in the domestic sphere and interpersonal relations (Hassan 1995; 1999; Burney 1999; Khan and Hussain 2008; Perveen 2010a). 'Domestic violence is both

an expression of men's power over women and children and a means through which that power is maintained' (Flood 2004: 234). Further, domestic violence against women is higher in cultures and context where violence is seen as a normal way to settle conflicts, where men feel entitled to power over women, where family gender relations are male-dominated, and where husband-wife relations are seen as private and women are socially isolated (Haj-Yahia 1998a; Heise 1998; Khan 2000; Douki et al. 2003; Niaz 2003; McCloskey and Eisler 2008; Flood 2009b).

The literature on masculinity and violence (Messerschmidt 1993; 2000; Archer 1994; Bowker 1998; Hearn 1998; Kimmel and Messner 2000; UNESCO 2000; Krienert 2003) describes male aggression and violence as social and cultural products and not biologically determined. Flood (1997) argues that the belief that males are born to be aggressive and violent is to excuse men from being responsible for their violent behaviour, and to justify the status quo. The notion of innate violence underscores the patriarchal ideology of male hegemony and entitlement which shapes Pakhtun masculinity as aggressive. Pakhtun history is a history of wars, conquests and aggression (Barth 1959). Pakhtun society can then be called a violent society because Pakhtuns tend to engage either in intra- or inter-tribal conflicts, and therefore learn to be violent from an early age. Merry (2008: 184) rightly argues that in militarized societies that value violence as an expression of heroism, the performance of a violent masculinity produces acclaim. This is certainly the case in Pakhtun culture.

Violence begets violence. This notion absolutely applies to Pakhtuns because in Pakhtun culture there is always the fear of danger so one learns and is encouraged to be aggressive in order to protect oneself; it is the main way to maintain order in this tribal society (Barth 1959; Lindholm 1979; Ahmed 1980). The notion of *narintoob*

(manliness or masculinism) in Pakhtun culture is strongly attached to aggressive behaviour because aggression is viewed as the main tool of reclaiming one's masculinity, one's status and respect in society. One of my older illiterate respondents, Gul Amin, said:

Courteousness and tolerance in our culture means cowardice and subjugation. People do not respect you if you are unable to harm and terrorise others. But if you have more *malatarr* (manpower or gunmen) then you have more power, more money and of course more respect because of the fear, otherwise you have no place and regard in society.

In Pakhtun society the more violent you are the more respectable and safer you are. Due to the lack of effective government, judicial and social security systems, Pakhtuns feel that they have to rely on their own power, which can take the form of more men or money, to maintain their safety. In other words, the ability to exercise power also depends on one's material conditions, specifically the ability to muster men and financial resources. Tolerance and the inability to take revenge undermine one's belittle position in the community. It is partly for this reason that Pakhtuns practise polygamy in order to have more male children. This renders them more powerful and influential in the community. Violence is involved in the power relations between men themselves, and male/male confrontations are a way to confirm masculinity and test and establish power (Alder 1992: 269). Men use violence to prove that they are men as well as to retain the hierarchies of power among men (Connell 1995; Bowker 1998; Hearn 1998).

Some of the respondents (8 out of 32) reported that the aggressive nature of the Pakhtuns has resulted in stereotyping them as violent, warlike, ruthless, and oppressive to women. However, the majority (26 out of 32) linked the aggressive

attitudes of the Pakhtuns to illiteracy and poverty. For example, Haleem, one of my younger literate respondents, said:

Pakhtuns are ignorant, aggressive and conservative because they are mostly illiterate and poor. At present we [Pakhtuns] have been labelled as warriors, fundamentalists and fond of conflicts. We are backward and hence not diplomatic that is why our land is burning and is a battlefield of war whereas other provinces like Punjab and Sindh are relatively peaceful. In my view the basic reason for this anarchy is our rigidity and vengeful attitudes due to which we don't bow our head to others.

Ignorance, rigidity, violence and bullying were constructed by my respondents as having a profound relation to the economy and education. A well-off person was thought to be easily able to fulfil his material needs and therefore have no economic stress so he did not need to resort to violence. Some thought that an educated person has a broader vision as well as a plan for his life and activities whereas the life and activities of an illiterate person are a mess because he has fewer employment opportunities and sources of income. Some (20 out of 26) thought that a poor and illiterate person is more frustrated and therefore more violent. Zaman (2004) found that economic stagnation, persistent poverty and clash of interests generate violence in the domestic and public spheres whereas Jahan (1994) and Clare (2000) argue that violence is largely associated with social deprivation, especially in a hierarchical situation where power and resources are unequally distributed. Merry (2008: 102) suggests that social groups that face structural violence in the form of poverty, hunger, racism, social deprivation are likely to be more violent to other men and within interpersonal relationships. All these factors of structural violence such as unemployment, or employment in low-status and low-income jobs prevail in Pakhtun culture and thus promote aggression and violence among Pakhtuns.

The role of the community in maintaining certain forms of masculinity

The adherence of Pakhtuns to their customs and traditions is maintained by public or community pressure in the form of taunts and slander called *peghor* in Pakhto. The notion of *peghor* (taunts or slur) by community members directly targets the ego and *gherat* (honour) of Pakhtuns and thus encourages aggression. In this context most of the conflicts and violence in Pakhtun society such as agnatic rivalries (*tarboorwali*), *badal* (revenge) and honour killings are largely *peghor* oriented. In these (honour related) situations a Pakhtun must show his machismo and violence in order to make evident to the community and people around that he is in compliance with expected forms of behaviour, otherwise he will face contempt and humiliation from the community as a *begherat* (dishonoured) person. For example, one of my younger educated respondents, Hamid, said: ‘Nobody here can escape from community surveillance. At the end of the day one has to surrender to the community expectations as it is said that *Da kale ooza kho da narkha ma ooza* (one can leave the village but not the traditions)’. Even in western culture, men who claim the full privileges of manhood must act in a masculine way i.e. must distinguish themselves from women (Connell 1995). In order to avoid public reprimands and thus social ostracism a Pakhtun will not hesitate to even exceed the honour code and religious tenets to gain respect and approbation in the community. For instance, one respondent indicated:

Actually the community and relatives intensively monitor our actions, therefore the majority of the people in my view sacrifice their personal interests for the interest of the community. For instance a person might wish to send his daughter to school or college but due to fear of community taunts they will not do it (Gul Amin, an older illiterate respondent).

Flood (1997: 2) argues that acting outside of the boundaries of masculine behaviour, through behaving in ways that are seen to be 'poofy' or 'wimpy' or 'girly' means that you are immediately faced with verbal and physical attack.

If there is a strong compliance, there is also a constant defiance in Pakhtun society because certain members of the community who hold a different vision sometimes have the courage to argue and challenge public views and patterns. Such persons may promote change in the community. One of my older illiterate respondents, Janullah, indicated that 'it is hard to satisfy other people because they only know criticism and the best way is to ignore them'. He urged for a change in the existing patterns and said:

I think the community perceptions in our culture need to be changed and we can change them by ignoring them and not participating in them. I think if a person, in his mind, is satisfied with his actions, then it does not matter whatever the people call and consider him but to me he is the wisest person. To be very frank it is hard to fulfil community expectations; for instance if you behave in a gentle way and are forgiving to others the community labels you as *begherat* (coward) because you did not take revenge and if you harm others and impose your will on others by force, then the community sees you as wicked and a devil.

This suggests a kind of no-win situation where failure to act in a forceful way is regarded as a sign of weakness, and an overly forceful manner can also lead to defamation.

One of the older educated respondents, Nasruddin, in this respect was quite content with his resistance to the community perceptions. He felt proud to have provided education to his daughters and to have allowed them to work. He said:

I am different from other Pakhtuns because I have a different approach from others as I prefer the education of daughters and all my daughters are highly qualified. One of my daughters graduated and is working as a nurse and the other two are studying and the middle one is a teacher. My father and other family members were not in favour of my daughters' education and often criticised me for my attitudes. My sisters did not attend high school because my father was against sending his young daughters to school because of the fear of community taunts and shame.

Nasruddin was educated and like the majority of the other educated respondents inclined towards modernization. His behaviour shows that resistance to prevailing norms is possible. But many Pakhtuns living in rural and tribal areas continue to stick to their traditions under the influence of public and community expectations.

Social ostracism is a major issue in a culture where the absence of a welfare state and of effective impersonal government means that community members extensively rely on each other for support and help. In contrast to those in rural communities, the Pakhtuns of the settled and urban areas I interviewed were more flexible as they live in a more heterogeneous environment with modern facilities and therefore have slightly different attitudes, especially towards women. But even Pakhtuns who have migrated to settled areas tend to observe the local traditions when they visit their areas of origin. Community and traditions are thus seen as closely inter-related. One of the older illiterate respondents, Gul Amin, said:

In certain areas such as Swat, Mardan, Peshawar, Abbatabad, Nowshehra and Karachi the Pakhtuns are flexible. For instance my wife here in Peshawar goes to the bazaar to shop and often even without observing purdah but when we go to our *abaie* (parental) area of Dir my wife then observes Purdah like the local women do and abstains from going outside the home without permission.

Male attitudes in Pakhtun society then range from rigid to flexible, from vengeful to compromising, from aggressive to tolerant and from hasty to considered. The more tolerant end of this range can benefit women as the majority of the respondents (26 out of 32) said that people are now more flexible towards each other and particularly to women regarding their rights and development such as education, consent in marriage, employment, health, and treatment at home. But there is still a long way to go to get more significant change because Pakhtun traditions in combination with Islamic values are deeply rooted in the minds of the people and their culture. As one of the older educated respondents, Zia-ur-Rahman, said: ‘how can we easily leave our centuries old traditions behind?’ I shall now turn to discuss how the persistence of the matrix of Pakhtun and Islamic values influences the Pakhtun gender structure and the notion of masculinity.

Pakhtun and Islam: Being a Pakhtun means being a Muslim

It is interesting to note that nearly all Pakhtuns are Muslims, the majority of which belong to the Sunni sect and are followers of the Hanafi school of thought²⁷ (see Ahmed 1986; Edwards 1993, 1996; Glatzer 1998; Shah 1999). In fact, there is no written historical proof of how Pakhtuns came into Islam but legend²⁸ says that Qais Abdur Rashid (575-661), the ancestor of all Pashtuns (Glatzer 1998: 9), after discovering the new religion of Islam visited the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in

²⁷ See <http://sl.zetaboards.com/anthroscape/topic/1423661/1/>, accessed on September 12, 2011.

²⁸ The legend of Qais travelling to the Arabian land and his meeting with the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been supported by some modern Pakhtun writers such as Akbar Syed Ahmed (1980), as well as foreign historians such as Sir Olaf Caroe (1948). These writers have mentioned Qais as the ancestor of Muslim Pakhtuns in the Pakhtun putative genealogy.

Medina and is believed to have converted to Islam²⁹. The legend further states that Qais, after his acceptance of Islam, married the daughter of Khalid bin Walid.

A Pakhtun is by definition a Muslim just as by birth he is Pakhtun (Ahmed 1980: 107). Thus being a Pakhtun means being a Muslim (Glatzer 1998). Some of the interviewees (21 out of 32) mentioned that a perfect Pakhtun is a person who is a perfect Muslim. For example, one of my younger uneducated respondents, Waris Khan, said: 'in my mind a perfect Pakhtun is a person who acts according to *mazhab* (religion).' Muhammad Naeem, an older educated respondent, said: 'I think the foremost quality of a Pakhtun is his firmness on *deen* (religion).' Naeem Khan, a younger educated respondent, stated: 'in my view a person is a real Pakhtun who treats others according to Islam'. And Altaf, an older educated interviewee, mentioned: 'I think a true Pakhtun is a man who is a true Muslim and acts according to Sharia'.

Although Pakhtuns are Muslims, their culture is Pakhtunwali (Caroe 1958; Ahmed 1976, 1980; Boesen 1983; Glatzer 2002). However, Pakhtuns practise Islam but mix it with their culture because they tend to consider Pakhto and Islam as alike and the practice of the one means the practice of the other. For example, one of the older educated respondents, Farooq, said: 'Islam is the second name of Pakhto and a real Pakhtun must practise both'. Omar Khan, a young illiterate respondent, stated: 'both Islam and Pakhto are important because we are both Pakhtuns and Muslims.' Like the majority (17 out of 32) of my other respondents, Ghafar, an older educated interviewee, too considered Islam and Pakhto alike. He said:

²⁹See, for example http://www.worldlingo.com/ma/enwiki/en/Qais_Abdur_Rashid; <http://www.scribd.com/doc/15687191/Pashtun-Tribes-Pukhtun-Tribes>; <http://www.gl.iit.edu/govdocs/afghanistan/Religion.html>, accessed on November 30, 2010.

Both Pakhto and Islam insist on respect for elders, kindness to women and children, helping the poor, neighbours and encouraging tolerance and forgiveness. Similarly both discourage atrocity, injustice, discrimination, racism, and vulgarity.

Islam emphasizes respect for elders. The elder may be a person (male or female) senior in age or position. In this respect parents have the highest level of respect in Islam among the elders and should not be disobeyed.

Islam and Pakhto hold similar views about women's treatment. For instance, Aatif, a younger literate interviewee, considered the approach of Islam and Pakhto similar in the context of women's seclusion and purdah. He said: 'both Islam and Pakhto insist on women's purdah and not allowing them to go outside the home without male permission. Similarly both Islam and Pakhto discourage vulgarity and mixing of women with *namoharams* (strangers).' Islam and Pakhto both place emphasis on helping the poor and other people in time of need. In the same way both condemn acts which disturb the peace and bring insecurity, exploitation and disrespect to others and society as a whole.

Although the Pakhtunwali and Islam are enmeshed and comply with each other in certain ways, in others, particularly in women's rights, they contradict each other.

Boesen (1983) notes:

Pakhtunwali is closely articulated with Islam in Pakhtun consciousness, and on the whole the two systems mutually reinforce each other, combining to form the dominant ideological matrix. However, it is important to note that on certain points –which are known to many Pakhtun—Pakhtunwali and Islam disagree, and some of these points have crucial effects on the actual situation of Pakhtun women. In these matters Islam generally gives way to what is considered as 'doing Pakhto' (Boesen 1983: 107).

Although Boesen's analysis of Pakhto and Islam is almost thirty years old, it still holds true as my interview data overwhelmingly showed. Many of my respondents endorsed the contradiction between Pakhto and Islam. I shall now turn to this.

Contradictions to Islam in Pakhtun culture

The majority of my interviewees, i.e. 29 out of 32, revealed a great contradiction between Islamic principles (Sharia) and the actions of Pakhtuns. Nearly all of them confessed that Pakhtuns prefer and practise their traditions and values rather than Islam. Multan Shah, an older literate respondent, said: 'We all love the Qur'an and everyone here wants to go to paradise but practically nobody here acts according to Sharia'. Misthre Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'Islam says that a Muslim should not stop talking and relations with another Muslim brother for more than three days but our people fight and stop interaction for decades with each other. I think it is ignorance and not Islam'. Haleem, a younger literate respondent, was very critical. He said: '*Mazhab na tasee soak dalta* (nobody stands by religion here) and the majority of the people are involved in every illegal and bad (*najayaz ao ghalath*) activity such as abduction, killing, claiming and grabbing others' properties and a lot more to count'. Khushdil Khan, an older illiterate respondent, said that sometimes Pakhtuns consciously feign ignorance and stick to Pakhto. He said: 'If you stick the Quran in front of them and argue that your actions are not according to the principles of Islam, they instead of accepting the reality will stick to their *zad* (rigidity) Pukhto'.

Some of the respondents mentioned that nowadays Pakhtuns not only deviate from and ignore their religion but also that they do not practise their traditions and Pakhto

either. One my older illiterate respondent, Faqir Muhammad, who worked as a daily labourer was not happy with this double standard and the hypocritical attitudes of people. He said: 'We just hear about Islam with one ear and throw it out of the other ear. In my mind everyone understands good and bad virtues but none of the shopkeepers, bakers, drivers and peasants act according to Sharia but exploit others. Everyone in the bazaar sells flour, sugar, pulses, and vegetables according to his own rate. There is no Pakhto, no Islam and no government at all.' Yar Mohammad very boldly indicated that 'Pukhto and *Shariath* (Sharia) are two different things and cannot go side by side'. He further added that 'Qur'an and Hadith provide us with guidance and it is really good to lead life according to Sharia but we are just Muslims by name.' One of my young literate respondents, Hamid, who was working as a social worker stated that 'presently everyone has got his own version of Islam and Pakhto'. And Rahmat Zada said: 'Pakhtuns have become materialistic and selfish and not aware of either Islam and Pakhto'. In his view,

...nearly 20% of our actions are according to Sharia whereas 80% of our behaviours are under the influence of Pukhto and traditions.

Rahmat Zada's family migrated from a rural area to a city and he was quite content with the flexible and liberal atmosphere of the city but he was not satisfied with the treatment of women and indicated a high level of gender disparity in less developed and rural areas. Ahmed (1980: 106) found that in both *nang* (tribal) and *qalang* (settled) areas all the respondents accepted un-Islamic practises if they could be justified as Pakhto. Although the Pakhtun code is supposed to be embedded in Islam (Ahmed 1980), there are great contradictions between Pakhto and Islam, particularly in their denial of women's rights (see e.g. Boesen 1980; Shaheen 2004; Kakar 2004).

Islam, Pakhto and gender

Although in many ways Islam emphasizes gender equality, selective and religiously flavoured cultural arguments have often been used to justify gender asymmetry and discriminatory gender practices (Badawi 1980). In my view Badawi's statement is absolutely right when applied to Pakhtun society because it is patriarchal and male dominated while women have restricted rights and are subject to men's authority. When I asked how do they think about the status of men and women, the majority of my interviewees (29 out of 32) mentioned, quoting religion, that men are superior, powerful and dominant over women. For example, one of my younger educated respondents, Maheeb, said: 'in Islam the status of a man is superior because he has more responsibilities than a woman such as earning and providing, constructing the house, financing the marriages of the daughters and sons while a woman only has the responsibility of doing chores and rearing children.' One of my young illiterate respondents, Watan, said: 'I have heard that if worship other than God were permissible, women would have been ordered to adore their husbands.' This view was echoed by other respondents as well. For example, Ghulam, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'any disobedience to a husband's order can lead women to hell.' These views very clearly indicated the attitudes towards women prevalent among my interviewees.

Male hegemony is part of both Pakhtunwali and Islam but exercised in somewhat different ways. For example, one of my younger educated respondents, Sabir, said:

The Qur'an says that men are superior to women. Because, first of all men have more wisdom than women. Second, all the prophets were men. Third, the testimony of one man is equal to the testimony of two women. Fourth, women have more complex diseases compared to men due to which their

good deeds are less. Fifth, the inheritance of one son is equal to the inheritance of two daughters. Sixth, men are the providers while women are dependent on men.

Sabir like the majority of other respondents presented as fact certain assumptions made in Islam which he cited as evidence for the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. Such culturally constructed gender differences serve to reinforce asymmetrical power structures between women and men and are used to legitimate patterns of gendered domination in Pakhtun culture. Aatif, a young literate respondent spoke about the ways in which Pakhtuns often quote specific verses of the Qur'an to prove the higher status of men. He endorsed this popular view and said: 'a man is superior and powerful and must lead and go ahead of a woman.' He actually meant that women are not able to lead. It is worth noting that in certain situations, for example, in authority and leading roles, matters of evidence and witnessing, and inheritance, Islam gives way to Pakhtun traditions in Pakhtun culture. Ghulam, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'All the prophets were men because God has created men to lead and women to obey, serve men and continue the human generation. That is why women are considered incompetent and are subject to men's authority.' He also said that 'men often do not consult and do not share sensitive matters with women because women cannot keep a secret and if you tell them something confidential then after few days you will find that everyone in the village is aware of it.' The implication of this is that women are not to be trusted and also, that women become the object of decisions rather than being involved in them. It suggests that women are not recognized as fully adult or as capable of acting in adult ways. Naeem Khan, a young educated respondent, said: 'it is commonly believed that women are the devil and conspire to instigate (domestic) conflict.' Some of the respondents mentioned various myths and idioms commonly

used in Pakhtun society to belittle women. For example, Sardar, a young illiterate respondent, said: 'it is generally said that if women were wise they would have beards (*ka khaza ke aqal ve no gera ba ye wa*).' Farooq, an older educated respondent, mentioned that men in our culture say that 'those who have acted on women's advice have always faced troubles.' Overall this asymmetrical Pakhtun gender structure in relation to (misinterpreted) Islamic laws encourages a system of gender politics which results in what Connell (1995) has called the 'patriarchal dividend'—privileges for men based on their gender role.

All of my respondents confessed that though in Sharia Law women have certain rights such as to inheritance, Pakhtuns prefer their traditions and customs to Islam. Ghulam, for example said:

Our treatment of women is totally un-Islamic. For instance, Sharia has given woman the right to education, to a job, to good nourishment, to inheritance, to marriage consent, to divorce and to the right of expressing her opinion but our people deny it. I think in women's issues Pakhtuns become blind about Islam and I have even seen our religious leaders and scholars preferring Pakhto when the issue is related to women.

One of my older educated respondents, Nasruddin, possessed a very sarcastic view of present-day behaviours and actions among Pakhtuns. He said:

Though we are Pakhtuns and Muslims which, in fact, is a double pride, our actions and treatments towards other people and particularly toward women are not according to Islam and even Punjabis are better than us.

Nasruddin had a religious background and condemned very openly the conservative and traditional attitudes of the Pakhtuns. He told me that Pakhtuns of today are Muslim in name only but behave un-Islamic in the majority of social matters and do

not believe in women's right. He asserted that such behaviours give us a bad/barbaric name in the outside world. Another interviewee, Haleem, said:

Today we [Pakhtuns in particular and Muslims in general] have been portrayed as rigid, obstinate, cruel, barbarians and transgressors of human rights on the local and international level because we blindly love and follow Islam and don't allow our women education and treat them just like servants.

The majority of the respondents (25 out of 32) indicated that it was against their *gherat* (honour) and *saritoob* (manhood) to show tolerance to women. It is in this sense that Pakhto is often regarded as half madness (*Pakhto nem kufar de*), according to Hamid, one of younger educated respondents. Aatif said that 'Pakhtuns conceive it a shame and against their *narintoob* (masculinity) and *gherat* (honour) to be dictated to by women'. He further added that: 'Islam condemns violence against women but Pakhtuns treat them like slaves and prisoners and even kill them in the name of so-called *gherat* (honour) and Pakhto (Pakhtunwali) and settle their disputes at the cost of women (*swara*)'. Because women and domestic violence are sensitive topics in our culture, it was not possible to find out how my interviewees actually treated the women in their households. Occasionally, they would let slip a comment that indicated something about this treatment, often not very positive, but for the most part our discussions were conducted at a certain level of generality.

Some interviewees reported that people generally practise those values and principles of Islam which can benefit them. This points to an opportunistic adherence to Islam where those aspects that benefit men and maintain their status as superior to women are supported, and those that do not are ignored. Islam then emerges not as a practice of principle but as the enactment of selective gender-

driven behaviours and beliefs. Some of my respondents mentioned that the reason for all sorts of stress and conflicts among Pakhtuns was their lack of Islamic knowledge and not acting upon Islamic values. For instance, Faqir Muhammad said: ‘We would have no troubles in life and our homes would be paradise for us and there would be fraternity among people if we knew and acted as true Muslims.’ Deviation from Islamic principles in Pakhtun society is partly legitimized as Pakhto *riwaj* (tradition), as if by such an explanation that deviation would be extenuated or even exculpated (Ahmed 1980: 106).

Justifying the deviation

Different kinds of justifications were offered by my interviewees for their preference and practice of Pakhto traditions rather than Sharia. For example, quite a few (22 out of 32) explained it in terms of the low literacy and mass ignorance of Pakhtuns regarding Islamic knowledge. Noorullah, a younger illiterate respondent, said: ‘I think people are illiterate and hardly five percent of our people have Islamic knowledge.’ Multan Shah, one of my older literate respondents, told me that ‘Pakhtuns have very little knowledge about Islam’. He said that they consider their culture and the majority of our rituals and ceremonies such as marriage ceremonies, circumcision, child birth, and others as traditional in orientation and not Islamic.

However, some respondents suggested that these conservative tendencies were changing with the rise of literacy and urbanization. For example, one of my older literate respondents, Muhammad Naeem, stated:

I think educated Pakhtuns and those living in the cities are somehow aware of the rules and show flexibility to women and believe in their rights, but the Pakhtuns of rural areas and mostly uneducated are still conservative.

Muhammad Naeem also pointed out that ‘overnight change is not possible because our culture and traditions are immensely entrenched in our personality and it is difficult to challenge or alter long-practised customs.’ Zia-ur-Rahman, an older educated respondent, said:

Our culture is 5000 years old and Islam is just 1400 years old, how can we easily leave our patterns and values? I think it will take time to understand Islam and to bring it into our lives. In my mind the influence of culture and traditions on our lives and behaviours are stronger than Sharia. For instance Sharia emphasizes an eye for an eye, but our Pakhtuns even kill more than ten to take revenge for one murder.

As one of my older illiterate respondents, Janullah, said: ‘for the restoration of our *gherat* (honour) we even breach the fundamental Islamic principles.’ The very notion that one has to exact more revenge than one has experienced damage links aggression to hierarchy and to a notion that only the strongest, most aggressive will survive. This belligerent retaliativeness fuels much aggressive behaviour.

Some of the respondents blamed religious scholars (*Mullas* or *Ullamah*) for their inflexible attitudes and adherence to traditions. Naeem Khan stated: ‘Actually we are poor and have little understanding of our religion and just follow our *Mullas* and blindly believe whatever they interpret of the Qur’an and Sharia.’ But others saw these religious leaders as misleading people, and not adhering to religious precepts themselves. Multan Shah, an older educated respondent, said:

The majority of our *Mullahs* are hypocrites and misguide innocent people. They never discuss women’s and children’s rights in the Friday sermon but

always quote the verses and Hadiths that can benefit them and males such as issues of Zakath, Iskhaths, the status and respect of the Imam (*mullah*), husbands and parents, the obligations of children and women towards their elders and men etc.

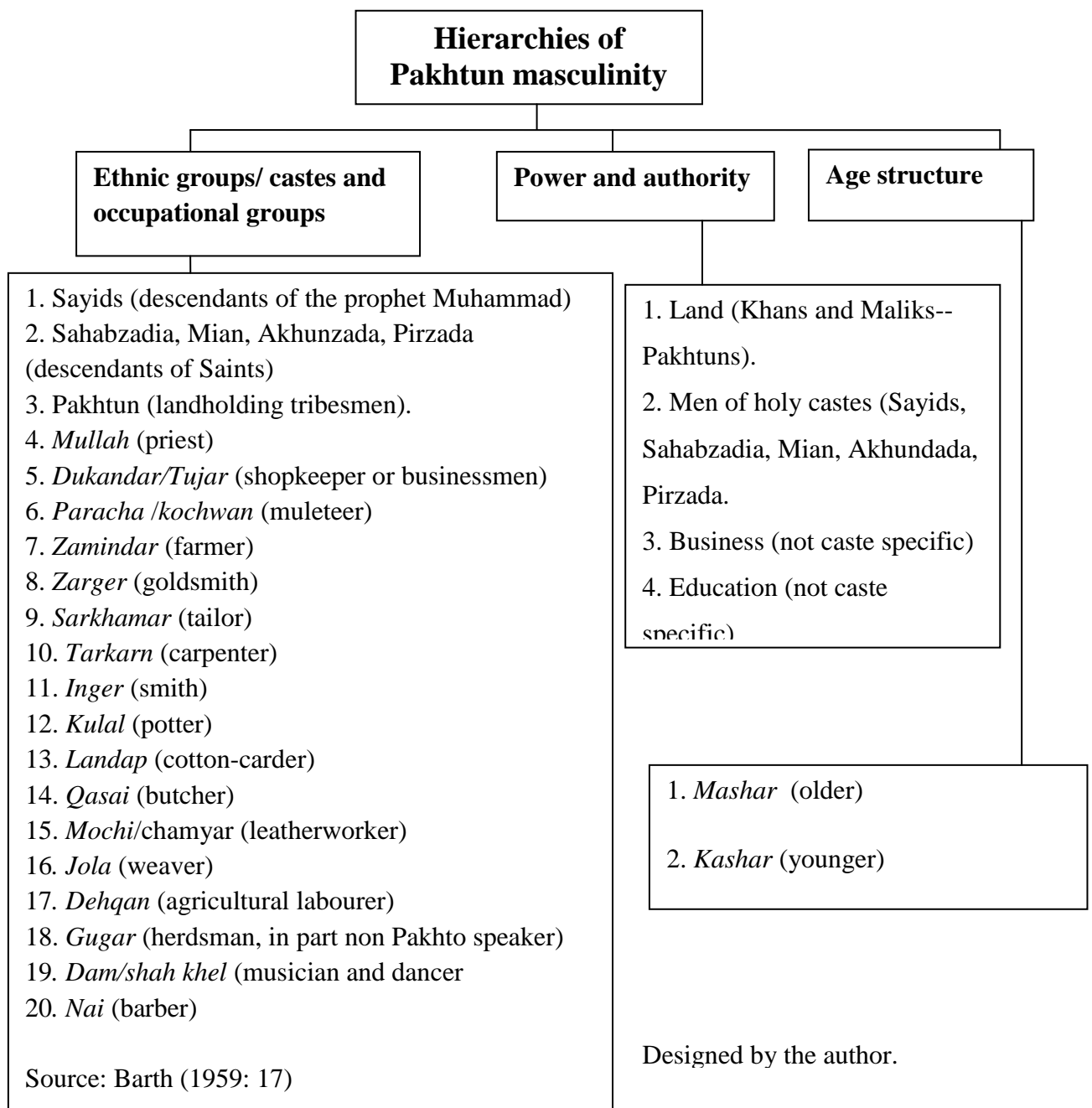
Actually, the *Mullah* in Pakhtun society is considered a most influential and powerful figure (Barth 1959). His behaviour and actions have intensive effects on the behaviours of the people he is supposed to be a role model for. It was intriguing to hear that not only common and ordinary Pakhtuns prefer and practise traditions when the issue is related to women's rights or *gherat* but sometimes *Mullahas* too find it difficult to act upon Islam when confronted with such issues.

From the views of the respondents it can be inferred that although Pakhtuns are Muslims because they are born into Muslim culture, the majority are unaware of the true meaning of Islam and rely on their traditions more than on Islam. They effectively considered their culture as their religion. Religion emerges as a matter of semi-personal interpretation that has little meaning for much of the everyday lives of these people. Instead of an abstract principle, it is mobilized selectively to suit the needs of the individual. The high illiteracy rate among Pakhtuns makes them rely on their religious leaders (*Mullahs*) and therefore follow them blindly. Ahmed (1980: 107) argues that both Pakhto and Islam are alike for Pakhtuns and when they see any contradiction, for instance in terms of taking interest on loans and the denial of women's rights in Paktho traditions, such 'deviances from Islam are partly legitimized in the eyes of society by a frank recognition of deviance and are explained as Pukhto *riwaj* ... Yes there is contradiction, we are wrong, but can a Pukhtun be anything but a Muslim'? (Ahmed 1980: 107).

Hierarchies of Pakhtun masculinity

Importantly, Pakhtun masculine structure is not monolithic but highly hierarchal. This exerts additional pressure on men and influences the perpetration of domestic violence against women. In Pakhtun society masculine hierarchies operate in particular ways articulated through ethnicity or caste and occupation, power and authority, and age structure as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Hierarchies of Pakhtun masculinity.



This complex system of Pakhtun hierarchies creates both multiple opportunities for status, power and authority, and multiple dilemmas. No single attribute of a man in itself determines his position. An important consequence of this intersectional complexity is that it allows for significant opportunities for status violation, aggression, conflicts, and results in the

In Pakhtun society people are divided into social strata with specific boundaries. This hierarchical type of grouping is called *qoum* which represents different ethnic groups, castes and ranked occupational groups (Barth 1959: 17). Each *qoum* has a name and a social standing in Pakhtun culture. Within the overall frame of a hegemonic masculinity, men may therefore be dominant or subordinate in Pakhtun society according to the ranking of their caste as in Figure 8. It is worth noting that like the Hindu caste system the caste system in Pakhtun society is not entirely rigid but situations such as inter-caste marriages can result in family conflicts, enmity, and honour killing (see Hassan 1999; Knudsen 2004; Welchman and Hossain 2005; Marsden 2007; Minallah et al. 2009).

As indicated in the 'Methodology' chapter, I used vignettes as a way of asking my interviewees about their views. One of these vignettes involved an inter-caste marriage. 21 out of 32 respondents said in relation to that vignette of Jahangir's and Asma's marriage (see Appendix III), that family background and social status must be considered before establishing matrimonial relation. One of the young educated respondents, Sabir, said: 'Pakhtuns often behave like Hindus when they regard some families, tribes and castes as high and others as inferior and low'. For individual men this means that though they live in a culture which values men, they themselves may not be valued due to their caste, low occupation or socio-economic position.

Pakhtuns expect the marriage of equals, including between close relatives, and allow the giving of a daughter to a man of superior status, but discourage the giving of women in marriage to inferior men as this is considered shaming (Barth 1959: 19). Although Barth's description is several decades old it continues to be true. For example, one of the educated respondents, Farooq, said: 'A girl in our culture establishes relationships between two families and before marriage the status of both the girl's and boy's families must be looked at.' Another older educated respondent, Multan Shah, told me that 'Pakhtuns prefer to know about the family background, ethnicity and social position of others before establishing matrimonial relations because some families are good, have high social positions and spotless character while some have inferior status and a bad track record.' Haleem, a younger educated respondent, said: 'lower-class people have cheap behaviours and can contaminate the family environment, that is why our people prefer their own relatives and good families such as the Sahabzadas, Mians, and *asel* (pure) Pakhtuns'.

In Pakhtun culture often the inherited social position is more important in terms of social status and ranking of masculinities as high or low than their economic position. For example, Zia ur Rahman, one of my older educated respondents, told me that 'lower caste/profession people, does not matter how wealthy they are, are often considered inferior than Pakhtuns in terms of their more limited concern with *gherat* and *namus* (honour and woman's pride)—the sign of Pakhtun masculinity, and therefore not preferred for establishing matrimonial relations.' It is for this reason that Asma's father refused Jahangir's proposal for his daughter, due to Jahangir's lower caste and social status and intended to kill his daughter and Jahangir to restore his *gherat* (honour and respect) in the community.

Pakhtuns living in urban areas, those who are educated as well as the poor, are now more flexible towards each other. Marriage patterns, apart from the caste system, are also increasingly based on economic position, public authority and the character of a person. For example, one of the older illiterate respondents, Rasool Khan, said: ‘one of my nieces is married to a *Nie* (barber) and we have never felt disgrace for our actions and establishing relations to him. We just looked at his character and took the decision’. Another older educated respondent, Muhammad Naeem, saw a change in the traditions of caste hegemony and subordination. He said:

In my view trends are changing here because ethnic superiority was very high in old times but now people are flexible and develop relations and contacts with people having more influence, authority and money irrespective of their castes. I have seen Pakhtun girls in marriage to Gujar, Nias, Mians, Sayids, and vice versa.

However, the importance of occupational groups or castes still exists and gives identity to their member individuals. Changes are occurring because of modernization and the greater diversity of professions. For example, the *Parachas*’s (muleteer) profession of carriage of goods through donkeys and mules has now been replaced by modern transportation systems and they are not attached to this profession only. Development and modernization have opened different and new kinds of opportunities and professions which have changed the traditional and rigid occupational set-up of Pakhtun society. However, the structure of power and authority is still centred on men, certain families, tribes and groups, and influences the hierarchies of masculinities.

Power and authority are strong determinants of social hierarchization (Magee and Galinsky 2008; Peterson 1994). Power refers to the ways through which some

(dominant) individuals or groups control valued resources and through which they exert influence over others (subordinates) (Magee and Galinsky 2008: 352), while authority is the legitimate use of this power (Ritzer 2002). However, drawing on Foucault (1972) power is highly situational in Pakhtun society. For example, a poor man might be powerful in his own house but does not hold the same power in the public sphere and compared to his boss or the Khan of the village.

Pakhtuns who own agricultural land (called Khans, Nawab or Malik) have significant power and influence in Pakhtun society. They often impede lower-caste people, who work as their labourers and peasants, from getting education and rising up the social ladder. They fear that if their subordinates get educated they might challenge their status, power and authority. For instance, the Nawab (ruler) of the former Dir State, Shah Jehan Khan, during his rule (1925-1960) banned all schools and basic education and anyone found getting schooling was either severely punished or expelled from the state. This attitude still prevails in Pakistan, particularly in areas under the control of feudal lords and religiously influential people (Kristof 2009).

From a violence against women perspective these feudal lords and their cronies still exercise the *droit de seigneur* in the form of the sexual abuse of the women of their subordinates. For example, Shah Jehan, the Nawab of Dir Upper, was reported, for instance by Farooq, one of my older educated respondents, as a great womanizer and used to chase the young beautiful daughters of his subordinates. This was confirmed by some other respondents as well. The famous incident of the gang rape of Mukhtara Mai (see e.g. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/4620065.stm>) which caught the attention of the world media is a clear manifestation of the violence against women by this feudal class and male chauvinism in Pakistan.

People of holy descent such as Sayids, Sahibzadas, Mians and Pirzada and religious scholars called *Mullahs* or *Ullamas* (not caste specific) are the second most powerful and authoritative men in Pakhtun society. They get power through their sanctity, piety and religious knowledge and services to the community in the form of their mediating role and settling of disputes in the light of Sharia (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1976, 1980). In the general elections of Pakistan held in 2001, a coalition of religious parties under the banner of MMA (Mutahida Majlise Amal) not only came to government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province but also got important positions in the central government (National Assembly and Senate). These religious groups and political parties on the one hand encourage social hierarchies and violence in Pakistan, for example though religious sectarianism they promote sectarian violence (Baixas 2008; Chandran 2003), and endogamous marriages (Bittles 2002). On the other hand they encourage gender hierarchies, disparities and violence against women articulated through male dominance and female subordination through the 'Hudood Ordinance' of Zia's Islamization project (Shaheed 2009). These religious parties and groups oppose any amendment to the gender-prejudiced laws in Pakistan (Perveen 2010a). Presently the Taliban, particularly in Pakhtun society, have been involved in killing and torturing women for violating the Islamic dress code and persistently warn that people will be treated harshly if their women are found in bazaars and other public places without any valid reason. This kind of attitude and forced pattern of gendered practices restricts women's choices, their access to public spaces and redress.

Wealth is the third source of power in Pakhtun society. Wealth can be earned through land and property or business. Landowning Pakhtuns are powerful and dominant because of their ownership of agricultural land but in developed areas and sometimes

in rural areas as well, people of lower castes and occupations can accumulate wealth and climb up the social ladder. One of the educated respondents, Hamid, reported that ‘presently the power and respect of people are measured through their wealth’. He named two men in the Dir district, namely Hiyadat Ullah who on the basis of his wealth became the MPA for his constituency and Haji Omar Dali of Dir Upper who was basically a poor man and illiterate but through his business skills became wealthy and gained status and respect in the local community.

All this makes for great social complexity. It is not possible for one man to embody all aspects of masculine hegemony³⁰. For example, a Pakhtun might have a lot of land and wealth but his level of *gherat* (honour) or *melmastia* (hospitality) might be lower than a Pakhtun of a low caste with no or less land and wealth. However, men as a group are privileged and dominant compared to women in the social structure of Pakhtun society. This dominance of men is often retained through oppression. In response to my question that what type of men usually perpetrate more domestic violence against women, a considerable proportion (11 out of 32) of my respondents revealed that every man whether educated or uneducated, rich or poor is a potential abuser and can perpetrate domestic violence against women (wives). For example, Janullah, one of my older illiterate respondents said: ‘In general all types of men whether poor, illiterate, rich and educated consider women as their servant and any mistake on the part of women is not bearable and could lead to domestic violence’.

However, 25 out of 32 of my interviewees thought that certain categories of men, for example illiterate and poor, are likely to be more violent and commit violence against women. Nadar, one of my illiterate respondents, said: ‘Hmmm! In my mind illiterate

³⁰ Masculine hegemony according to Ricciardelli et al. (2010) can be viewed as a role, status set, ideals, behaviour or personal characteristics.

and poor people are more violent, rigid and ignorant and difficult to convince as compared to educated and well off persons. Illiterate people like me don't have the mind to understand things and just believe in aggression to resolve domestic tensions and other issues'. Hamid, one of my young educated respondents, described the different ways of assault and abusing used by different categories of men. He said:

I think doing or committing of domestic violence against women depends on the social background of a man and on the intensity of violation by women. Usually an illiterate man does both physical and oral abuse but a decent and educated man mostly does mental torturing. For instance educated men use social boycott such as stop talking to her, do not eat the food cooked by her, stop visiting her bed, and ignore her or do not give her money. I think [he was talking about his own experience] social boycott is the best way to tame woman.

Hamid's view reflects that violence against women is taken for granted and it's the women's level of defiance as mentioned by the notion 'intensity of violation by women' upon which the kind of punishment depends that is given to women. However, educated and illiterate men use different kinds of tactics and mechanisms to dominate women.

Few respondents thought that neither poverty nor the education of a man has any association with his violent behaviours towards women. Rather, they mentioned it [doing violence to women] as a kind of attitudes which can be found in all categories of men. They also thought it problematic. For example, Gul Mohammad, one of my illiterate respondents, said: 'I do not think that violence has a relation with the economic or educational position of a person. In my opinion our women do not make us poor but our luck and it is shameful to blame women as responsible for such things and beat them for trivial reasons. It is actually cowardice to abuse and

beat poor women'. Another respondent, Nasruddin, described: 'Err..! In my observation it depends on the attitudes of men and women and their level of temper. Some men although illiterate but their acts and behaviour towards women and others are better than educated men and vice versa. But I tell you one thing that educated women can better handle things and face less violence compared to illiterate women.' This view of women's education and its relative association with the lower rate of violence against women was shared by many of my other respondents. Research has shown a significant relationship between lower socio-economic and educational status of both men and women and domestic violence against women in Pakistan (see Faery and Noor 2004; Fikree et al. 2005; Khan and Hussain 2008; Rabbani et al. 2008).

Hierarchies of Pakhtun masculinity through age structure

Age structure plays a significant role in structuring social positions and authority in Pakhtun society. Pakhtun culture distinguishes between *mashar* (senior people) and *kashar* (junior people) positions. The *mashar* is the father, grandfather, uncle, elder brother and any other person who is senior in terms of age or holds, irrespective of his age, authority and a powerful public position. A *mashar*, irrespective of his caste and occupation, must be respected by the *kashar* who is subordinate and obedient. A *masher* in Pakhtun culture, particularly in terms of household relations, holds absolute authority and his decisions are always expected to be honoured by the *kasharan* (plural of *kashar*). As one of the younger illiterate respondents, Nadar, said:

In our area *masharan* (parents or seniors) do not consult their *kasharan* (youngsters) regarding family matters and decisions, especially arranging their marriages. My father arranged my marriage when I was in Karachi and informed me just one month before of my marriage. If you challenge and reject the decisions of your elders, people call you disobedient and disrespectful. I think due to the fear of community taunts and pressure we bow our heads to the authority of our *masharan*.

This view of patriarchal autocracy was shared by some of my other younger respondents as well. However, some older respondents denied this complaint of the youngsters and negated this charge and thought it the other way round. For example, one senior respondent, Sher Zaman, said: 'In my view parents make rational decisions because they have got more experience than youngsters,...as you know they (youngsters) are enthusiastic and think with their heart...and no senior (mashar) in my view wants to harm his youngsters.' Kordvani (2002: 2-3) argues that it is believed that senior men are more thoughtful and make reasonable decisions keeping in mind the collective good of the kin. Therefore, other (subordinate) family members must honour and accept their decisions. However, some of my younger respondents thought it biased, cruel, and selfish on the part of parents. Sardar, a younger illiterate respondent, for example, said: 'Parents first think of their benefits...usually parents arrange the marriage of a son at an early age because the family [mother] will either need a support in doing housework or parents just do it to throw the responsibility off their heads...and then it is the son who faces the disaster and bears the shame. You tell me in such a situation what he (son) could do...certainly he cannot kill his parents but he would commit violence against his wife to get rid of his frustration and reciprocate the cruelty of the parents (*da zra baras pa khaza obase*).' It is interesting to note first that this person actually considers the killing of his parents, even if only to deny it, as a possible response to

being the object of their decisions. Secondly, the perpetration of violence against the spouse is cast in terms of revenge. In other words, it is not about the relation between the spouses but about using the wife as an object in the antagonistic relations to the parents. This sense of women as objects in the articulation of other kinds of relations was very strong among my participants. It heightened the vulnerability of women who have no say in their fate. The cruelty done to the young men by their seniors (parents), particularly in the context of forced or imposed marriages, results in a counter production of violence. Violence done by the parents to their children (sons) is often compensated by them through violence done to wives because they are subordinate to their husbands (Blanchet 2001).

In this chapter my data highlighted that Pakhtun masculinity in reality contradicts its idealized form articulated through the Pakhtun honour code, particularly in the notion of *saritoob* and *narintoob* (manhood behaviour and virility) and *gherat* (self honour and dignity). My interviewees' comments also showed a substantial deviation of Pakhtuns from the Islamic model of behaviour—which has largely been enmeshed in the Pakhtunwali. Their practices are also by and large not compatible with modern living patterns, specifically in the context of Pakhtuns' treatment of their women. It was in this sense that the 'doing of Pakhto' was equated with the 'doing of *jahelyat* and *zad* (ignorance and rigidity)', and by implication this version of Pakhtun masculinity was thought outmoded. One reason my interviewees discussed this was the tremendous influence and pressure of the community in retaining old-fashioned traditions and promoting the culture of violence.

In this chapter I showed that Pakhtun society operates through a series of interlocking social hierarchies, determined by men's genealogy, their birth position

in the family, their caste and occupation, and economic and educational status. As indicated above, these hierarchies are not absolute but can shift through change in wealth or knowledge, for example. However, functional positions (e.g. being older or younger) remain dominant determinants of one's status, both in wider society and inside the family. Such intense and multiple stratification, and its associated inescapability, creates strong social divisions among men that on the one hand can be seen as guarantors of social order and stability but on the other also provide multiple opportunities for boundary transgression through the sheer existence of those boundaries. To put it more simply, these stratifications are a source of structuration as much as offering potential for conflicts and (domestic) violence. One can easily be offended, easily transgressed against, easily be seen as overstepping a mark. Combined with a value system based on particular notions of honour (*gherat*) and the defence of that honour (*badal*), this means that the structures of Pakhtun culture with their strong hierarchizations invite conflict and aggression both within the home and outside, and promote the perpetration of domestic violence against women because violence not only works as an outlet of men's aggression and men's frustration but also works to maintain the dominance of men over women.

In general, my interview data demonstrated that women in Pakhtun society are vulnerable to domestic violence because of its tribal and conflict-ridden social structure, the male-dominated honour code, selective interpretation of the religious text and a misconstrued understanding of religion. The Pakhtun family system in this regard can be argued is the site which not only promotes the culture of gender disparity and women's marginalization but also encourages the perpetration of

domestic violence against women. A report of the United Nations in this regard notes:

Comprehensive studies on domestic violence against women indicate that domestic violence is a structural rather than causal problem. It is the structure of the family that leads to or legitimizes the acts, emotions or phenomenon that are identified as the causes of domestic violence under the causal analysis. This family structure is a structure that is mirrored and confirmed in the structure of society, which condones the oppression of women and tolerates male violence as one of the instruments in the perpetuation of this power balance (United Nations, 1980: 30 cited in Hassan 1995: 6).

This correctly reflects the scenario of Pakhtun society because the family structure of the Pakhtuns represents a serious abuse of power, trust, and dependency relationships which is largely hidden behind social acceptance, and the pressure is always put on women to remain silent and maintain the family unit, no matter what they have to suffer (Pillai 2001: 966). In the next chapter I analyse the family structure of the Pakhtuns in perpetuating the perpetration of domestic violence against women.

Chapter 4: THE FAMILY STRUCTURE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN PAKHTUN SOCIETY

Introduction

For many, particularly women and girls, the family is a place that jeopardizes lives and breeds gender discrimination and violence against women (Khan 2000: 3). The family structure of Pakistani society in which the man is the ultimate ruler of the household and which is seen as absolutely private perpetuates violence against women (Niaz 2003: 173). This chapter focuses on domestic violence against women in relation to the Pakhtun family structure. In Pakhtun culture, families are not monolithic but complex depending upon the region (e.g. urban or settled and rural or tribal areas) and the socio-economic background of the family and this, as I shall discuss, can influence the status of women and the perpetration of domestic violence. In this chapter I shall specifically deal with how the Pakhtun family structure, its types (joint and nuclear), its hierarchies and power structures, its marriage patterns, its distribution of resources and inheritance, and its socio-economic and educational conditions contribute to the perpetration of domestic violence against women. In my discussion I draw on my interview data, including the responses to the vignettes of Nadia and Akhtar, Ayaz and Jamila and Jahangir and Asma (see Appendix III). I shall begin by discussing the joint and nuclear family structures and how these impact the relations between married couples, household relations and the perpetration of domestic violence.

The Pakhtun family structure: the joint/extended and the nuclear family systems

Structurally, the family in Pakhtun society may take two forms, either joint and extended, or nuclear. In either form, it is always headed by a (senior) male member, who plays a key role in the household decisions, and leads the unit vis-à-vis the outside (Barth 1959). Strict patterns of gender divisions of labour and gendered spatialization are an important characteristic of the Pakhtun family system. Women also hold some (domestic) authority but their social role depends on their age, marital status, and their family and marriage type. On the whole they are inferior to males in terms of authority and power, and occupy the bottom ranks in the family hierarchal structure (Ahmed 1980; Boesen 1983; Kamal 1999; Shaheen 2004; Ahmed 2006; Khan and Samina 2009).

In the joint family set up all the married and unmarried sons live together under the authority of the father or elder brother. All the (male) family members equally share the house and property, work together and pool their incomes. However, senior-hood (*mashartoob*) takes precedence over junior-hood (*kashartoob*) in terms of respect, privileges and authority (Barth 1959: 16). Rewards, honour, shame and profit and loss are supposedly equally shared by the household members. This means collective (family) interest is considered more important than individual interests in the joint family system. It is in this sense that my respondents saw the joint family system as a symbol of unity, social security, strength and power in the community. However, from the violence against women perspective, as I shall discuss below, it also provides the opportunity for more people (in-laws) to abuse or beat the (non-conformant) women. By in-laws I mean brothers-in-law, mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

In the nuclear family system a man lives independently of his natal family with his wife and children and does not share his income, food and property with his other brothers and their families. However, in times of crisis and any other unusual situation involving family security, honour and during times of *gham-ao-khadi* (sorrows and joys), it is the brothers and other close relatives who cooperate and stand by each other. Thus a person while living independently, has yet a great reliance on his extended family. It is in this sense that Pakhtuns often live in compound families in the form of a village, particularly in rural areas,— a group of some joint, extended and nuclear families sharing a similar lineage and property. Sometimes Pakhtuns live in extended nuclear families. That is, they have separate houses, property and businesses but live close to each other or share the same house and property but boundaries are allocated to each member with considerable independence, privacy and a share in the communal property. Contrary to the joint family, the nuclear family system provides much more freedom and authority to women and limits the opportunity of violence to be committed to only one man—the husband.

Table 5. Respondents' preference for joint or nuclear family type by category of respondent.

Category of respondents		Preferred family system		Total
		Joint	Nuclear	
Illiterate	A (young)	6	2	8
	B (old)	6	2	8
Literate	C (young)	3	5	8
	D (old)	2	6	8
Total		17	15	32

The figures in Table 5 indicate some interesting differences in preference. Out of a total of 32 male interviewees, 17 were living or preferred to live in the joint family system. This constituted a slight majority and one might say that my interviewees were pretty much evenly split between those who preferred the joint and those who preferred a nuclear family set up. Of the 17 who preferred joint living two thirds were illiterate and one third were literate.

Of the total of 16 illiterate interviewees, 12, that is three quarters, preferred joint family living and, importantly, there was no difference in terms of age regarding this. Both older and younger illiterate men tended to prefer the joint family system. Literate respondents had more inclination towards nuclear and independent living than illiterate ones. This may be because their welfare was less dependent on their extended families but also, possibly, because they wanted to have more autonomy.

There are immediate and obvious reasons why my illiterate respondents were more likely to prefer the joint family set-up. First of these was poverty. In a context where there is no state welfare provision, the family becomes the main source of support, and where economic opportunities are few, relying on others in the family is one way to escape destitution. Poverty, but also maintaining the family strength and the influence/control of the family elders, was mentioned as the major reasons for joint living. For example, Misthre Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'I like the joint family system because I am poor and cannot afford to buy a separate house and meet the expenses of the family by myself.' Gul Mohammad, another illiterate respondent, stated: 'I like to live in the joint setting because it strengthens unity and is economical as well.' He said that the expenses of a family with ten members for food are equal to that of a family of five. This may be wishful thinking to some extent but there are clearly certain economics of scale.

Although, the joint/extended family was considered a source of unity, some of my respondents (12 out of 32) thought it also promotes hatred and intra-family conflicts. For instance, Gul Amin, an older illiterate respondent, said: ‘I have generally observed that when a joint family disintegrates, maybe due to the death of the patriarch or due to the increase in size of the family or any internal conflict and hatred in the family, it often leads to severe hostility and litigation among the brothers regarding the property distribution.’ Yar Mohammad, another older illiterate respondent explained that ‘usually a brother with more income is not happy to share his earning equally with his idle brothers and this can lead to slandering, jealousy and hatred among the brothers which sometimes descends to the next generation.’ As the joint family structure in Pakhtun culture requires its members to contribute their income to the joint pool, the person who provides the most income, usually the older brother or the brother with more income, suffers the most when the joint family disintegrates³¹ which often leads to hatred, or agnatic rivalry called *tarboorwali* among parallel cousins (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1980). Such agnatic rivalries are prevented or settled by the Jirga judicial system, through interfamily marriages as well as sometimes through swara in case of blood feud or *badal* (exchange) marriages. This makes the life of the—swara and exchanged—woman hell because she has low status and is treated like a servant including violently, both physically and psychologically (see Minallah 2003; Usafzai 2005; Ebrahim 2006; Bilgrami 2011).

Some of my respondents thought the joint family a good system if the elder (*masher*) of the family was just and equalitarian. For instance, Faqir Muhammad, an older illiterate respondent, said: ‘the joint family system is good when the elders of

³¹ Having distributed his resources and income to many family members, he lacks resources as he ages.

the family treat all family members equally, take care of the interest of every member and have full control the household.’ Similarly the role of the patriarch and matriarch were thought to either promote or mitigate the perpetration of domestic violence. In this regard domestic violence research in South Asian societies shows contradictory results. For example, Naeem et al. (2008) and Koenig et al. (2003) have mentioned a lower risk of domestic violence against women in the joint/extended families, possibly due to the reconciliatory role of senior family members, given that domestic abuse may often counteract the interest of the extended family, while others (e.g. Pillai 2001; Fikree et al. 2005; Khan and Hussain 2008; Rabbani et al. 2008) perceive the joint structure as more oppressive to women because they see the in-laws as potential perpetrators of domestic violence against women. However, contrary to the role of the father in controlling violence in the domestic sphere, the mother-in-law was thought by many of my respondents to be encouraging domestic violence, particularly against daughters-in-law.

Family type and domestic violence

I asked my interviewees which family system they thought made violence against women more likely. The majority of my respondents, i.e. 25 out of 32, thought that the joint family structure promotes violence and wife abuse. For example, one of my older illiterate respondents, Janullah, who was living in a joint family with his four brothers said:

As far as I have observed, domestic violence is usually high in joint living. Actually, women in the joint family are not happy and all the time involved in fighting, slandering, backbiting, and belittling of each other and thus to

control them is to abuse and beat them. As you know, it is said that woman is a devil creature which can only be harnessed through *lawar* (stick).

The notion of women in joint family structures as unhappy and prone to in-fighting was echoed by other respondents as well. More worrying perhaps was the attendant attitude that therefore women needed to be controlled through abuse. This was regarded as a normalized form of activity, underwritten by a disdainful attitude towards women (the 'devil's creature') that legitimated that abuse. There was no sense that any grievances the women might have might actually be legitimate. The stereotype was of women as harridans who had to be subdued at all costs. In Pakhtun culture women in the joint family, as outsiders, meaning non-blood relatives or non-members of the immediate family, and due to the strict purdah culture, remain restricted to the domestic environment which impacts on their tolerance levels towards each other and also provides the opportunity for jealousy to arise and for the surveillance of each other's behaviours. Some interviewees said that the women in the joint set-up often quarrel about issues to do with children and individual interests or about the distribution of domestic chores.

Violence is used as an unquestioned mechanism to regulate the women. One of my younger illiterate respondents, Nadar, said: 'our women only know the language of the stick.' He also argued that women have a rebellious nature that cannot be corrected but through reprimands and violence. Similar views were echoed by Sardar, a young illiterate respondent. He said: 'women are born from the curve rib of Adam which cannot be smoothed but through anger and violence.' Maheeb, a younger educated respondent, said: 'women are just like the tail of a dog, thousand times you bend it, it will remain erect.' These kinds of myths and stereotypes in themselves work to justify domestic violence against women and whenever violence

happens it is the abused woman who is blamed for it. Domestic violence then is often perpetrated quite consciously as a mechanism for subordination (Watts and Zimmerman 2002: 1232) or to ensure the obedience of women (Karlekar 1998: 1742). In the context of Asian culture, for example, Pillai (2001: 695) argues that violence is legitimate and considered a normal part of married life. The argument is that if women can live up to their cultural [obedient] role, adequately perform their tasks and manage their family relationships, they will suffer no or less abuse.

One reason why women are more prone to be the objects of domestic violence in the joint structure is because they are considered a potential threat to the unity of the joint family. For instance, Omar Khan, an illiterate young respondent, said: ‘women [wives] are usually not happy in the joint structure because they have to serve not only the husband but also the in-laws. Also the husband gives more preference to the interests of natal family members and ignores his wife and children.’ He further said that ‘one way of upholding the joint structure and unity of the family, it requires the women [wives] to be controlled, through violence, and not provide them the opportunity to cultivate hatred among the brothers.’ This view was shared by about half of (14 out of 32) my other respondents. Here the point is that in Pakhtun culture, specifically in the joint family structure, the natal bonds are considered more important than conjugal ties. A Pakhtun man is generally expected to be strict with his women [wife] and not to tolerate women’s arguments and disobedience. If he does, he himself faces scolding and being labelled a hen-pecked husband (Barth 1959: 22). This threatens his *gherat*.

One of my younger illiterate respondents, Sardar, who was living in a joint family and wished to have a separate house but could not afford it, said: ‘when a man in our

culture, particularly in the joint family set-up, is not able to control his women or obeys and consults his wife regarding family affairs, he is considered a *begherat* (dishonoured) person.’ Another younger educated respondent, Aatif, who preferred living in a nuclear family, but stuck to joint living because of his dependence on his strict father stated: ‘In joint living one has to sacrifice one’s individual interest but often at the cost of one’s wife’s being abused.’ This means that a person may be aware of the abuse done to his wife but due to either traditional respect for the elders and their unquestioned entitlement to be violent or due to the fear of breaking the natal bonds and the shame factor in supporting his wife, a man even if he knows that his wife is being abused will remain silent. McCloskey and Eisler (2008: 3) argue that in male-dominated societies violence against women has generally been considered a prerogative of men. This is true for Pakhtun society. For example, Fikree et al. (2005: 53) found that Pakhtuns were four times more likely than other ethnic groups in Pakistan to abuse their wives.

Some respondents, particularly the older ones, who were living in nuclear families but had experience of joint living, criticized joint living not only in terms of women’s exploitation but for many other reasons as well such as it kills privacy, reduces possibilities of personal savings and property making, creates problems with hygiene and low quality of food, and reduces one’s ability to decide about the children. For example, Muhammad Naeem, an older educated respondent, stated: ‘the nuclear family gives the woman status, authority and a sense of responsibility because she is more careful in spending the money and has a greater understanding with her husband. Also one can provide for his children the best of education and can fulfil one’s wife’s demands such as going out for a picnic and a drive which is difficult in joint living.’ The point here is that the nuclear family minimises the

number of potential perpetrators of violence to only one, the husband, compared to many (in-laws) in the joint family. Also the nuclear family promotes more understanding between wife and husband, strengthens conjugal bonds and increases women's self-esteem, confidence and personal liberty, as some of my respondents argued. However, separating one's family from the joint structure is not easy, and particularly when the intention or demand for it comes from the women's (daughters-in-law) side it can make them vulnerable to violence, as expressed below in the vignette of Nadia.

Nadia's story: a depiction of the joint family and domestic violence

One way in which I sought to elicit my interviewees' views of the relation between domestic violence and the joint family structure was through the vignette concerning Nadia and Akhtar. This vignette describes that after two years of court trials Akhtar and Nadia dissolved their marriage contract. The reason for their separation was that Nadia's husband and her in-laws were not happy with her arrogant, liberal and disobedient behaviours. Actually Nadia was not happy because she had a rich, educated and liberal family background while Akhtar's family was joint, reserved and strict. Also Nadia wanted a separate home while Akhtar was not ready to leave his joint family. Nadia also blamed her brother-in-laws for frequently being violent towards her.

The point about using this vignette was to explore my participants' views regarding the violence perpetrated by the in-laws, particularly the brothers-in-law; the attitude and treatment of daughters-in-law and in-laws towards each other; and the demand of Nadia (being educated and liberal and having a wealthy family background) for independent living.

The majority of my respondents (28 out of 30) condemned the brothers-in-law's violence against Nadia. For example, Sardar, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'I think they (in-laws) have no right to assault and abuse Nadia.' All of my respondents saw (brother)-in-laws as potential perpetrators of domestic violence in the joint living system. Some illiterate respondents asserted that only the husband has the right of perpetrating domestic violence. For example, Waris Khan, one of the younger illiterate respondents, said: 'I think only the husband should be entitled to commit domestic violence'. Domestic violence appears normalized here, although who can exercise it was restricted to a particular person. But it was not questioned as such. In contrast, some of the educated respondents not only disagreed with the entitlement to be violent for the husband but also thought violence from the in-laws was unacceptable and un-Islamic. But for example, Haleem, one of the younger educated interviewees, stated:

Even a husband in Sharia has no right to harass his wife. How can the brothers-in-law be entitled to commit violence against their brothers' wives? Sharia has emphasized purdah from the brothers-in-law, but we [Pakhtuns] practise traditions more than Islam and live jointly where natal family members consider it their right to do oral and even often do physical violence to women who deviate from their traditional role and threaten the honour of the family.

Violence here was taken for granted. Even when respondents were aware of women's rights as sanctioned by Sharia and the formal laws of Pakistan, they remained dominated by their cultural attitudes, and educated people sometimes found it difficult to walk away from these traditions, despite knowing them to be contrary to Islamic rules. In a study in Pakistan Fikree et al. (2005) found that half of the males (46 %) thought that a husband has the right to hit his wife. In another

study Ali and Bustamante-Gavino (2007) found a very high prevalence (97%) of verbal abuse by the husband and in-laws, whereas the prevalence of physical abuse was 80% and 57% by the husband and in-laws respectively.

11 out of 30 of my interviewees associated the brothers-in-law's violence with weakness on the part of the victim's husband. For example, Yar Muhammad, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'in our culture such events happen when the husband is either weak both economically and physically and dependent on his brothers and parents or *shareef* (gullible and naive).' Sher Zaman, another older illiterate respondent, said: 'violence by the in-laws happens when the husband is a coward and obedient to his brothers or not present at home and working abroad.' Dependency in any form makes people vulnerable to exploitation in the joint family structure. In Pakhtun society brothers consider it their right to regulate [often through violence] a brother's wife if they feel that she is not under his control. In this sense it can be argued that brothers-in-law not only guard the supposedly fragile masculinity of their brother by committing violence against his wife but by doing this they also uphold the honour as well as the joint unity of the family.

Regarding Nadia's demand for a separate house and not living in the joint structure, 17 out of 32 of my respondents, particularly the educated ones, saw this as a valid demand and Nadia's right. For example, Ibrahim, a younger educated respondent, said: 'I think Nadia was right to demand a separate house and Akhtar should have supported her and convinced his parents of Nadia's concern'. Sabir, a younger educated respondent, said: 'I think her demand is right both from the perspective of Islam and Human Rights. Sharia has made man responsible for the protection and provision of his family. It is obligatory for a man to fulfil his wife's demand.' Some illiterate respondents saw this demand as correct from an Islamic point of view but

contrary to Pakhto traditions. For example, Waris Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'I am not in favour of Nadia's demand because as a Pakhtun woman she should have obeyed Akhtar and his parents'. Mithre Khan said: 'Her behaviour is against our culture because it is just like she is snatching Akhtar from his poor parents.'

Two thirds of the interviewees (19 out of 32) thought that the personal traits of Nadia and Akhtar as well as their family background should have been examined before their marriage. Zia ur Rahman, an older literate respondent, said that before their marriage the parents of Nadia and Akhtar should have looked at the character, social position and status of their children as well as the family structure and environment and if it was not a good match then they should not have arranged their marriage. Barth (1959) accurately indicates that Pakhtuns prefer the marriage of equals. Noor Ullah, a young illiterate respondent, described it from the perspective of love and arranged marriages. He said: 'if it was a love marriage then Akhtar was guilty because in love marriage the husband stands with his wife and fulfils her every demand but if it was an arranged marriage then both the parents of Akhtar and Nadia were guilty for not having had the ability to resolve the issue.'

Regarding the treatment of Nadia and her husband and in-laws of each other, nearly half of my interviewees criticized Nadia because being an educated woman she should have shown tolerance, endurance and responsibility while the rest thought the approach of Akhtar and his family members was orthodox and contrary to Sharia. For example, Hamid, a younger educated respondent, said: 'Nadia before demanding separate living should have looked at Akhtar's economic position and if Akhtar could not afford it, and if he was the only provider for his family then Nadia

was wrong and guilty.’ Naeem Khan, a younger educated respondent, asserted that Akhtar and his family members should have treated Nadia with respect because she was from a rich family where she had all facilities. He elaborated that our people, particularly the elders, always stick to their authority and expect the daughter-in-law to serve them. This he thought was against Islam. Altaf, a younger illiterate respondent, criticised the attitudes of educated girls. He said: ‘nowadays educated and liberal girls like Nadia do not pay proper respect to and obey the in-laws, want to lead their lives according to their own wishes and do not care for family honour and respect’. This view was shared by some other respondents as well. In Pakhtun culture, an educated person is expected to have exemplary behaviour. That is why Nadia’s behaviour was condemned by many respondents. The attitude attributed to an educated woman strengthens the public perception, particularly of the illiterate, regarding the harmful effects of education on women which can discourage girls from getting an education in Pakhtun society.

Nonetheless, the majority of my respondents thought education of both males and females was important and necessary to alter these conservative traditions, gender inequality, and minimise the issue of domestic violence against women. One of my older educated respondents, Nasruddin, said: ‘Education in my mind is the key to the solution of our every problem. Presently educated women like Nadia are not happy in the joint family system... two of my daughters have separate families, and they are happy and do not face domestic abuse either from the husbands or in-laws...because my daughters are employed (school teachers) and not dependent on their husbands.’ It can be argued that education, especially women’s education, empowers women and makes them independent because it opens the window of employment for them and also makes them aware of their rights so that it is more

difficult for men (husbands) and in-laws to exploit them. Although Pakhtuns are now theoretically widely in favour of women's education, as 32 out of 32 of my respondents favoured it, at the same time they fear that it contaminates women's mind, promotes women's liberty, and therefore consider it a threat to their traditional family structure, norms and men's control over women. They thus hold somewhat contradictory attitudes.

The majority of my respondents described the joint family system as more oppressive to women than the nuclear family, since women in the joint family are expected to show obedience to and serve the in-laws as well as the husband. For the sake of upholding the family unity and honour, a woman must be seen to be fully controlled, including through the use of violence which is largely justified in such cases, no matter who perpetrates it.

Power structures and social hierarchy in the family organization and the issue of domestic violence

Factors such as sex, gender, and age establish a complex system of social hierarchies and power in the Pakhtun family structure, mainly composed of three categories of descending levels of power: a) the elders including the parents (father and mother) and other members senior in age; b) the spouses (husband and wife or wives), and c) the younger ones including children, sons(-in-law) and daughters(-in-law), and other members of the household junior in age as shown in the Figure 9. However, it is important to note that in Pakhtun culture individual level features such as competence, economic and educational status can also influence one's power and position in the family's hierarchy.

Figure 9. Structure of power and social hierarchy in the Pakhtun family system.

Elders	Status	Power position and hierarchy of gender in the Pakhtun family.
	High	Parents and elder brothers occupy the top position in the family and enjoy absolute power. Of the parents, the father has more power and controlling influence, controls the majority of the family matters and resources and leads the family in the public sphere.
	Equal	In terms of respect both mother and father are equal before the children.
	Low	The mother has less power, restricted to the domestic sphere. After the father she has immense influence in domestic affairs. She is usually responsible for either doing or distributing the domestic chores among the daughters (-in-law).
Spouses	High	The husband enjoys a powerful position and has absolute power and privileges in the conjugal family and relations. In the joint structure he holds less power than the father or an elder brother.
	Equal	Extremely rare except when they (husband and wife) have the same profession and equal earning.
	Low	Wives occupy a lower status and are subject to their husbands' authority. Usually the elder brother's wife in the joint structure has a higher status than the other brothers' wives. However, a complex social and power hierarchy exists among the wives in case of polygamy.
Youngsters	High	Sons are preferred and have socio-cultural importance for the family. Usually the older son (brother) has the highest status, power and privileges in the family after the father. But often the social statuses of the sons are influenced by their individual competence, skills, obedience to parents, education and economic position.
	Equal	The sons have equal share in the family property, while daughters' share is culturally not recognized. Sharia confers a lesser share to them than males.
	Low	Daughters are not welcomed and discriminated against in all aspects of life. Usually the older daughter and sister has a higher status among the daughters and sisters. Daughters and sisters have higher status than daughters-in-law and wives.

Source: Devised by the author.

The power structure which underlies social hierarchies is a complex phenomenon because of family diversity racially, inter-generationally and situationally (Bedford and Blieszner 2000: 164). This is the case in Pakhtun society where the status of women considerably diverges, depending on the geographical location (urban and

rural areas), class, tribe and socio-economic, educational and political background of the family. However, men in Pakhtun culture presuppose their authority over females in all situations, both in the domestic and public spheres. In this regard Barth explains:

...in the family, the husband and father has all authority; he controls the social intercourse of the family members to the extent of being able, at his pleasure, to cut his wife off from all contact with her natal kin; he controls all property; he may use political compulsion to enforce his authority; and he alone has the right to dissolve the domestic unit or expel its members, by divorce or by disinheriting the children. These are his formal rights (Barth 1959: 22).

Ramadan (2008) argues that men choose to act aggressively to women in order to get what they want and to uphold their powerful positions in the household. However, as some of my respondents indicated, women in the role of mothers and when they have more sons have greater respect, power and privileges in the family. But the status of wives and daughters-(in-law) is lower and they face high discrimination. Male violence to women is related to all these (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Dobash et al. 1992; Haj-Yahia 1998a; Hearn 1998; Heise 1998; Anderson and Umberson 2001; Kimmel 2002a).

The preference of natal relations over conjugal ties promotes domestic violence against women

The preference of natal or blood relations over matrimonial relations in the Pakhtun family system is another reason for domestic violence against women. The majority of my respondents, i.e. 24 out of 32, stated that Pakhtuns consider natal ties more

important than marital ones because they are thought permanent while conjugal relations are transitory. For example, some of my respondents stated:

...people in our areas prefer permanent relations and take less care of the interests of wives because it is believed that a wife can be changed or divorced but it is difficult to change the mother, father, sisters and other close relatives (Omar Khan, an illiterate respondent).

Naeem, a younger educated respondent said:

Hmmm....usually people see natal family members and relations as vital...and whenever there is maladjustment or any clash of interest between the daughter-in-law and the in-laws...men (husbands) instead of supporting their wives give preference to their blood relations.

These views which were shared by many of my other interviewees indicate the inferior position of the wives compared to natal members, particularly in the joint household. Janullah, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'parents are respected despite their obnoxious behaviour but the wife, even if she is correct and obedient, has a lower status than blood relatives.' It is important to note that the prevalence of such attitudes in the Pakhtun family system come from Islamic beliefs which emphasize the respect for parents and assure great bounty for servitude towards parents and upholding of natal ties³². One of my older illiterate respondents, Khushdil Khan, told me: 'I think we cannot tolerate the insult of our parents by our wives because parents are just like the Qibla^[33] for us and their unhappiness could bring misfortune to us.' Nasruddin, an older educated respondent, said: 'mothers are respected because it is believed that Paradise lies under their feet.' Such beliefs

³² See <http://www.ezsoftech.com/akram/women.asp>; <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/5053>, accessed on February 17, 2011.

³³ The Qibla is a cubical shaped mosque in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia towards which Muslims read their prayers and is considered the most sacred and revered place in Islam.

make children (sons) submit to the authority of their parents, particularly the mother, and protect their interests more than those of their wives.

Although, Islam emphasizes the rights of wives³⁴ Pakhtuns do not recognize them.

For example, Hamid, a younger educated respondent, said:

In my view our people are ignorant and practise their old and out-dated traditions and give very little attention to Islam regarding wife's rights. If the daughter-in-law willingly obeys and serves the mother-in-law then it is okay and morally good but it is not obligatory [in the Islamic context] that she must serve and obey her other in-laws.

Hamid further told me these traditions are so deeply entrenched in the psyche of the people that often, even if they know of the Islamic rights of women's [wives], they find it hard to resist traditions. He further mentioned that 'Islam even has emphasized purdah from the brothers-in-law but we live jointly and feel shame to disintegrate our families from the joint structure'. Because of certain socio-cultural reasons such as dependency on family networks, belief in the unity of joint living as a source of economic and military power, shame from community reproach and taunts as a disobedient and *begherat* (dishonour) son or brother, Pakhtuns prefer natal ties over conjugal relations, according to my respondents. Ghafar, an older educated respondent, said: '...if you do it [break natal ties] you face the torment and ridicule from the family members and relatives by bullying and calling you *da khaze dala* (a puppet of the wife)...there is no bigger insult and dishonour for a man in our culture but to be called a hen-packed husband (*da khaze mazdur*).' The impact of being insulted in an honour culture cannot be overestimated (Atherton 2011). It is

³⁴ See <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/10680/rights%20of%20wife>; http://www.womeninislam.ws/en/women-right-islam_wives.aspx, accessed on February 17, 2011.

this which promotes violence to women as a reaction against men's insult and being called *begherat* (dishonoured) by the natal family members and community.

The natal family members promote aggressive masculinity and provoke domestic violence against women (daughters-in-law)

When I asked my interviewees about who among the natal family members or in-laws are likely to incite the perpetration of domestic violence, the majority, 27 out of total 32, mentioned the mother-in-law, 17 out of 32 mentioned sisters-in-law, 8 out of 32 mentioned brothers-in-law, 3 out of 32 mentioned fathers-in-law while 14 out of 32 said that all natal family members were directly or indirectly involved in the perpetration of domestic violence. In a study on domestic violence in Pakistan, Rabbani et al. (2008: 419) found that the husband was the main perpetrator (88%) of violence along with other natal family members including the mother-in-law as the next most common abuser in concert with daughters and sons. Further, they reported that 'mothers-in-law initiated violence against the victim by complaining to the husband' (Rabbani et al. 2008: 419).

One of my older literate respondents, Nasruddin, said:

Hmm...you know in our culture every member of the household is entitled to check on the daughters-in-law but the mother-in-law in my mind is often more involved in the encouragement of violence against the daughter-in-law. As mothers in our culture are highly revered and obeyed...therefore in case of any complaint by the mother regarding the ill-treatment and disobedience of the son's wife...the sons blindly believe it and abuse the wife.

In the Pakhtun [joint] family system for a woman to be called a good wife, she must serve the husband's family. In this context one of my illiterate respondents, Sardar, sarcastically said 'a woman in the first place is the wife of the whole family and then of the husband.' Blanchet (2001: 84) argues that in South Asian cultures the mother-in-law is entitled to and closely checks her daughters-in-law in the absence of her sons and later reports their faults to her sons. In this sense the mother-in-law's position is such that she is completely dependent on her son(s) and due to the fear of losing her son's support she may not hesitate to morally blackmail her son(s) by taunting, and in this way promote aggressive masculinity in her son(s) and instead of appeasing she applauds the violence her sons exert to their wives (ibid).

One argument is that women's violence against women follows a cycle. For example, the mothers-in-laws' violence reproduces the abuse and injustices they once suffered (Khan and Hussain 2008: 248). In this regard Fernandez (1997: 451) argues that 'the involvement of female family members may also be seen as a product of the interlocking systems of gender and life cycle based hierarchies, whereby a mother-in-law's involvement in the violence against her daughter-in-law is a manifestation of the former's family identity taking precedence over her gender identity.' Thus the conversion of an abused and exploited daughter-in-law into an oppressive mother-in-law in Asian societies more generally and in Muslim societies in particular is a common occurrence (Counts et al. 1992; Hegland 1992; Faery and Noor 2004; Khan and Hussain 2008). '*Sas be kabi baho te*' (the mother-in-law was once the daughter-in-law) is a common saying. Women therefore enjoy a better position with a lower risk of domestic violence while living in the nuclear structure where the husband is not under the influence of his family (Khan and Hussain 2008). It is important to note that the collusion and even active involvement of female

household members and specifically mothers-in-law in the abuse of other females is an accepted occurrence. This goes away from traditional notions of domestic violence being perpetrated by men against women.

Pakhtun marriage patterns and domestic violence

It is through marriage that a family, like elsewhere, is maintained in Pakhtun society. However, the customs and traditions pertaining to marriage in Pakhtun society have largely been oppressive to women and contribute as factors to domestic violence. For example, as will be discussed, these customs discourage asking women's consent regarding their marriage and selection of partner, although Sharia emphasizes the opposite. Since through marriage a husband gets the mastery and ownership of his woman and her move into another household increases the responsibility of the women in Pakhtun culture, it is in this sense that all of my respondents thought that married women face and are more vulnerable to domestic violence compared to unmarried women. Khushdil Khan, an older illiterate respondent, said:

In my mind married women face more violence because they are mostly the wives and you know the responsibilities of a wife in our society are more than an unmarried woman. I think when unmarried women have some doubtful behaviours, illicit links and liberal attitudes they might face violence.

In the case of unmarried women, not assisting the mother and sisters in domestic chores, going outside the house without prior permission, establishing illicit relationships and living as an orphan or with step-parents were mentioned as reasons

for abuse. As marriages are largely patrilocal in Pakhtun society (Ahmed 1980: 242), upon marriage a woman goes to her in-laws. This transfers the authority over her from her father (or guardian) to her husband and therefore she retains no more legal rights in her natal family and cannot appeal to her father or brothers to protect her from her husband (Barth 1959: 39).

Below I examine how domestic violence against women is perpetrated through the prevalent marriage system in Pakhtun society, specifically focusing on exogamy and endogamy, early marriages, love and arranged marriages, polygamy, *badal* (exchange) marriages, swara marriage as well as other customs related to marriage such as dowry and *sar-pisa* (bride price). In this discussion I will draw on my respondents' opinion and also their responses to of two vignettes of Akhtar and Jamila and Jahangir and Asma. I shall also incorporate some of the recently reported domestic violence events in the Pakistani media concerning marriage customs in support of my discussion.

Exogamy, endogamy and domestic violence

In Pakhtun society there is a history of marrying within the extended family. Due to the influence of Islam as well as the growing literacy rate and modernization factors, this pattern is beginning to weaken. People are increasingly more open and inclined towards exogamous marriages. For example, Rasool Khan, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'I think people are now more open and largely prefer the character and social background of the persons such as education, employment, income, authority etc and not the family background for establishing marriage ties.' Muhammad Naeem, an older educated respondent, who had an exogamous

marriage, said: 'presently people, especially educated, are changing the old trends because they are more flexible, tolerant and aware.' The practice of hypergamous marriages is melting the hard social boundaries especially for those lower caste members who are more educated, economically stable, and hold public authority (Nayab 2009).

I asked my participants which type of marriage, i.e., endogamous or exogamous, they thought promotes domestic violence. About half of my respondents (17 out of 32) said that women face more violence in exogamous marriages, whereas 13 out of 32 said that endogamous marriages encourage more domestic violence. Two respondents thought that domestic violence happens in both kinds of marriages.

Women who had married endogamously were described as 'insider' women, those who had married exogamously, as 'outsider' women. Clearly, both endogamous and exogamous marriages were seen as potential sources of domestic violence. But 18 of respondents described individual-level factors of a woman such as her ability to adjust to the newly established conjugal relations, her obedience level and respect for the family members and values, her skills in performing domestic chores and handling of domestic issues, her education level and attitudes as influencing the likelihood of domestic violence as more significant than her insider or outsider status. However, they also considered the relative identity of a woman in either increasing or decreasing the chances of violence. If one considers the list of factors mentioned by my interviewees that influenced the possibilities of domestic violence occurring, it is clear that much is expected of women marrying into a family, and most of it relates to her assumption of her subordinate position in the family. Indeed, one might agree that the degree of her subordination as expressed through her alignment on all levels with the family she moves into, is key to her survival in that

family. Words such as ‘obedience’ that, outside the traditional marriage vows are not used in western cultures to describe conjugal relations, are completely normalized here, sealing women’s subordinate position.

My respondents pointed out that outsider women often face violence due to the lack of prior acquaintance with their husbands and their husband’s family environment. For example, Ibrahim, a younger literate respondent, said that ‘an outsider woman often finds it difficult to adjust quickly to the new family environment and thus any maladjustment and misunderstanding with her in-laws and husband can lead to abuse and violence.’ Khusdil Khan, an older illiterate respondent, said that ‘sometimes the outsider women, as being outsiders, are less obedient and careful about the honour and respect of the family and household members and any breach by them of the family traditions can lead to violence and abuse.’ Gul Muhammad, a younger illiterate respondent, explained this point from his own family perspective. He said:

My elder brother’s wife is an outsider and had no acquaintance with our family before. Although she is talented she is arrogant and disobedient and pays no respect to our relatives and family members. That is why all our family members are not happy with her behaviours and why she faces violence...but on the other hand, my younger brother’s wife is our cousin who pays respect to everyone and although she is not good at cooking and other work but more obedient that is why everybody loves and respects her. I mean relatives are relatives because they respect and honour you in all circumstances.

In this narrative a clear hierarchy emerges that places respectful behaviour, whatever is understood by this, above practical competence. It also raises the question of what precisely ‘being arrogant and disobedient’ means or involves. Sometimes one gets

the sense that any independence of mind whatsoever by a woman leads to her castigation—which is also always seen as her fault, rather than an issue of household arrangements, or unreasonable behaviours and/or expectations on the part of others. This hierarchy is coupled with the notion that blood relations enjoy a privileged status by virtue of being blood relations—thus reinforcing the ‘outsider’ status of an ‘outsider’ woman. There is also an explicit assumption that only blood relations will understand and be supportive of each other.

Naeem Khan, a younger educated respondent, illustrated this fact from his own life.

He said:

My wife is my cousin and sometimes I tolerate her mistakes just for the sake of our permanent family relations because I fear that if I assaulted her it could disturb our family ties and relations which I think can shatter the whole family.

Violence itself is not questioned here. But its effect on extended family relations is taken into consideration. A man may want to be violent towards his wife but due to the fear of family feuds he may be more careful about committing violence against the insider woman. Here one argument is that committing domestic violence against women in case of endogamous marriages, can sometimes lead to violence. In this sense outsider women face more violence compared to insider women because Pakhtuns privilege permanent family bonds over those established through marriage which are considered fragile. As the outsider women are attached only through marital ties, there are no serious ramifications when they are abused. Women in exogamous marriages then can face more violence because the perpetrators in such marriages have no fear of instigating intra-family conflicts as well as feeling no shame for divorcing a disobedient woman as depicted in the vignette of Akhtar and

Nadia (see Appendix III). Thus women in exogamous marriages can face more violence because a quick adjustment to the new family and its domestic environment is difficult at the start; being an outsider they are not considered a permanent part of the family and it is anticipated that they will be careless of the family's honour and less obedient to the in-laws.

The respondents who considered endogamous marriages more problematic for women mentioned that family marriages are less expensive and easily contracted and that women in such relations, due to the shared family honour and respect for permanent ties, have zero chances of walking away from a battering relationship. Therefore they are more vulnerable to domestic violence as compared to exogamous marriages. For example, Omar Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'People usually take more care of the outsider women because relations with outsiders develop after a long struggle and haggle compared to insiders and are therefore sometimes considered more important.' Nasruddin, an older educated respondent, mentioned the lower status of a blood-related woman in the proverb, '*khpala lor ao kho karmezana ve* (one's daughter and sister has a runny nose).' Waris Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, stated: 'As outsiders are new people with different patterns, therefore people show more respect to them in order to hide their weaknesses due to fear that it will be exposed to others.' In this sense violence to outsider women was constructed as occurring when they related insider familial matters and issues to their natal family members or to others. It is in this regard that women are thought not to be reliable in Pakhtun culture and therefore in need of castigation.

As family conflicts are considered inevitable in Pakhtun society, this affects women and makes them vulnerable to violence, both psychological and physical, if they are

married to close relatives. Fikree et al. (2005: 52) found a significant increase in physical abuse when couples were close relatives. Hamid, a younger literate respondent, said that ‘sometimes internal family conflict regarding property and business can affect the husband and wife relations in case of endogamy.’ He further mentioned that in such circumstances the woman is tormented by not letting her visit her parents’ house during festive occasions as well as abusing her relatives and putting them down to her face. Another young literate respondent, Rahmat Zada, also mentioned this point and stated that due to *tarboorwali* (agnatic cousins’ rivalry and enmity), women married endogamously face domestic assault and violence. As Barth (1959) states: ‘When good cause for conflict arises, cousins become estranged, no matter who their wives may be’ (40).

It is clear that both exogamous and endogamous marriages provide contexts in which domestic violence can occur. In the case of exogamous marriages, the lack of familiarity with the husband’s family was cited as a reason for violence, since that lack of familiarity could lead to transgression out of ignorance. At the same time the effort of forging relations with non-blood-related families could act as a protector against violence, and there was a sense that a woman potentially had the home to return to. In endogamous marriages, women, familiar with the family and its rites and rituals, enjoy lower status precisely because they are family, and they have nowhere to turn in case of violence. In either scenario domestic violence was heightened by the prevailing custom of early marriages.

The custom of early marriages and domestic violence

In South Asian cultures the custom of early marriages, with or without the consent of the boys and girls, still largely prevails which is not only a violation of basic child rights but also constitutes a form of violence and can result in complex health problems for women and other problems, specifically domestic violence (Khan 2000; Umemoto 2001). Child marriages are very common in all the provinces of Pakistan (Niaz 2003: 178). In Pakistan the legal marriage age for girls is 16 and for boys 18 years.³⁵ However, traditional practices related to early marriages still continue, particularly in the rural areas and more specifically among the Pakhtuns. Perveen (2009: xxi) rightly asserts that the rule of tradition is often more powerful than the rule of law in Pakistan.

The effects of early marriages are traumatic for young couples but women, being very young, often suffer the most because they have very limited sexual knowledge which not only leads to childhood pregnancy and to sexually transmitted diseases but also has an adverse effect on the education and employment opportunities of girls (Khan 2000: 7; Umemoto 2001: 9-12; Bates et al. 2004: 191). Once married, such girls are no longer eligible for either education or employment. Furthermore, domestic violence is often used to establish and enforce gender roles in early marriage (Bates et al. 2004: 191). Several studies in the South Asian context (see e.g. Jejeebhoy and Cook 1997; Schuler et al. 1998; Blanchet 2001; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Koenig et al. 2003) have reported that women's higher age at marriage is significantly associated with a decreasing risk of domestic violence.

³⁵ See <http://www.law.emory.edu/ifl/legal/pakistan.htm>, accessed on February 24, 2011.

Some of my respondents described early marriages as one reason for men's frustration, aggression and perpetration of domestic violence in the family. For example, Sardar, a younger illiterate respondent, said:

In my mind early marriages are the basic reason for domestic violence and marital conflicts...parents in our society arrange the marriages of their children at an early age which I think leads to more children and increases the tension of a man when he is unable to feed them. Just imagine I have seven children at this age and am still immature and unemployed...my father was cruel to me, arranged my marriage at an early age...I was young and was not aware of the burden of responsibilities... now I repent that I should not have married so early but what else could I do...

Sardar told me that parents just to get rid of the responsibility for their children quickly arrange the marriages of their children which he said affects both men and women. He added that his wife, although she was very young, due to several pregnancies at an early age and lack of proper medication was always sick, could not perform her domestic duties adequately and looked like his grandmother. He said that he now gets no satisfaction from her and was often violent to her when she did something wrong.

The custom of booking (*newaka*) promotes domestic violence

In Pakhtun society there exists a custom called *newaka* (booking) through which a girl is booked for a boy either at birth or in her early years. Normally a booking is done through a promise by the parents of the children or by the grandparents in the case of a joint family. This is a harmful practice which is oppressive to both boys and girls. However, for girls I think it jeopardises their lives, makes them vulnerable

to domestic violence and perpetual tension, and can lead to family conflicts. To elicit my respondents' views on this issue I used the vignette of Jamila and Ayaz:

The parents of Jamila and Ayaz made a promise of their marriage when they were below age five. After twenty years Jamila got an education and was appointed as a lecturer while Ayaz was unemployed and became a taxi driver. Ayaz sent his parents to remind Jamila's parents of their promise but Jamila refused as she was not in favour of her parents' decision. Ayaz then tried to abduct Jamila when she was on her way home but failed and after this event hostility started between the two families. After a long struggle and failure of reconciliation by the local community, Ayaz then got married to another girl in the village but still claims the ownership of Jamila and considers her his wife. Now if somebody proposes to Jamila, Ayaz and his family threaten both families with severe consequences. Jamila is still unmarried and constantly faces threats and violence.

All the interviewees that I asked if parents should be entitled to arrange their children's marriage at an early age condemned the custom of booking and criticised the autocracy of the parents. They thought it against Sharia but normal in Pakhto. They also considered it a reason for domestic violence. For example, Omar Khan, a young illiterate respondent, told me about a similar event that happened in his village where the boy refused to marry the girl who was selected by his parents for him. The parents of the boy at last convinced him of the marriage but the boy imposed a condition that he would contract a second marriage of his choice. After five years he had a second marriage of his choice because he was not happy with his first wife who then faced isolation and violence. Naeem Khan, a younger literate respondent, told me that this custom kills the freedom of both young men and women. Another younger literate respondent, Rahmat Zada, said that with the passage of time one's priorities and choices change and in such cases often when

children grow up they become interested in someone else and even commit suicide when they are not happy with their parents' decision. He also referred to Jamila's status as an educated woman who had reached a high status while Ayaz was illiterate and traditional, and certainly not a good match for such a highly qualified girl. Similar opinions were repeated by other respondents as well.

The custom of booking is largely practised among close relatives as well as often among friends. Since Pakhto according to Ahmed (1980: 249) can literally mean *lawaz* or *zaba* (word of honour), 'the word is given and accepted as such by the community as well'. In this sense the booking of a new-born girl by the boy's parents is equivalent to a formal engagement in Pakhtun society. A violation of this verbal agreement demands revenge (*badal*) and honour killing in Pakhtun culture because the girl, through such a promise, is considered married. It was in this sense that Ayaz was claiming the ownership of Jamila and not letting her marry others. The vast majority of my interviewees disagreed with Ayaz's behaviour and condemned his attitude towards Jamila. However, some said that Ayaz was right from the Pakhto point of view but wrong according to Islamic principles. For example, Aatif, a younger literate respondent, said: 'If it is viewed from our cultural perspective then Ayaz is right in his claim and she (Jamila) must marry him but Sharia favours Jamila's views because she is mature and has the right to refuse or accept the proposal.' I agree with Ahmed's (1980: 248) argument that Pakhtuns although well aware of these deviations from Islamic customs and theoretically condemning such practices, at the same time say that they are helpless to change them as 'this is the Pukhto *riwaj* (custom)'.

Love/arranged marriages and domestic violence

In Pakhtun society, most of the marriages are arranged by senior members of the household and not by the marrying parties themselves. This means that elders in Pakhtun culture have the power to impose marriage. The majority of my respondents, i.e. 21 out of 32, said that domestic violence is high when a marriage is arranged by the parents and without a man's consent but lower in case of love marriages and when it is based on a mutual understanding and affection between the husband and wife before or after marriage. This may be an illusion since western marriages are based on 'love' and not arranged, yet domestic violence incidents persist (Blanchet 2001). One of my younger educated respondents, Haleem, said:

In my view the basic reason of domestic violence in our society is arranged marriages...our elders do not ask their children's consent and choices regarding their marriages and other issues but impose their will on them...it is then a matter of fate and if the wife is attractive and decent and if the boy likes her, then it is okay, otherwise matrimonial conflicts are inevitable.

Nadar, a younger illiterate respondent, stated:

The treatment and relations of men to women are good in case of love marriages or in case both have mutual understanding before or after marriage. When the marriage is arranged by the parents and when the husband is not satisfied with the choice of his parents, then the treatment of the wife by the husband is not good and often worse than servants and prisoners.

Here the position of the woman married into a family and hence considered of low worth becomes very evident—in case of her being disliked by her husband, she can be treated 'worse than servants or prisoners', and with impunity. In Pakhtun society, young people normally feel obliged to submit to their parents' decision. Nadar

explained that he like many of his friends was not happy with his elders' decision because they just tried to get rid of the responsibility but made their life hell. He said that his parents had selected his wife without consulting him. He told me that he did not love and like his wife but he had to accept it because he could not disagree and dishonour his parents.

Opposing parental authority means exposing oneself to the reputation of being a bad son in the eyes of the community. A son may not wish to marry a particular girl or at a particular time but generally the timing of a son's marriage is determined by the parents' needs, for instance to get extra help to assist the mother-in-law or to harness the son and to focus him on household responsibilities (Blanchet 2001). Arranged marriages are often claimed to be superior to love marriages but incompatibility, lack of mutual attraction and consequent frustrations produce tragic scenarios where domestic violence is endemic (Blanchet 2001: 34).

Some of the respondents, for instance Naeem, an older educated interviewee, told me that these traditions are slowly changing, particularly among educated families and in developed localities, and that now people ask their sons about their choices for marriage. However, they are still traditional regarding the asking of women's choice in such matters. Women in Pakhtun culture cannot indicate their preferences because it is a taboo. To do so puts a question mark on their chastity and character and the consequences can be drastic and can lead to honour killing.

Honour killing can occur in the context of eloped marriages when lovers find it difficult to marry because of their elders' disapproval due to reasons such as differences between the partners in ethnicity, religion and class. Marsden (2007: 92) argues that elopement marriages in the purdah-focused society of north Pakistan are

acts of resistance against the patriarchal Islamic society. In her study *Pakistan: Murder in Purdah*, Frenkiel (1999) describes that honour killing is culturally justified in Pakistani society. In a response to her question, a man in the Punjab province who had killed his daughter in the name of honour after she ran away with a boy whom she loved, said: 'I killed her because she dishonoured me...had I not done it I would have no respect in the community' (cited in Frenkiel 1999: 13). In Pakhtun culture punishment for an eloped couple is killing in order to restore the honour of the family (Ahmed 1980). I used one vignette to probe attitudes towards elopement.

The story of Asama's and Jahangir's love marriage

Elopement and love affairs are taboos and unforgivable in Pakhtun culture. To elicit my respondents' views on this issue and its ramifications for the couples and their families as well as on Pakhtun masculinity, I used the vignette of Jahangir and Asma:

Asma eloped with Jahangir and later married in a civil court. Actually both Jahangir and Asma had a mutual understanding and love but Asma's father was a hurdle in their marriage and did not want Jahangir to marry his daughter because of his different ethnicity and low family status. Asma's father, in order to restore his honour, damaged through the elopement of his daughter, tried to kill both in the name of honour but with the efforts of the village Jirga the matter was settled by giving in swara one of Jahangir's sister to the already married brother of Asma.

28 out of 32 of my respondents considered the love marriage in the vignette correct and in accordance with Sharia. They thought that both Asma and Jahangir were mature, in love, and willing to marry each other. However, they considered it contrary to Pakhtun traditions. For example, Gul Amin, an older illiterate

respondent, said: 'actually there is no defect in their marriage and also valid from an Islamic point of view, but you know we sometimes prefer our Pakhto more than Islam.' Sardar, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'I think it is against the Pakhtun traditions. Otherwise, Islam favours it.' He told me that 'their traditions do not allow this. Parents' decisions are generally believed to be wiser and beneficial because they have more experience than their children and know the ups and downs of life. I think Jahangir and Asma should have accepted their parents' will'. Sardar explained that children often condemn their parents' decisions but when they themselves turn into parents, they realize the troubles of their elders. However, he suggested that parents should not behave in a totalitarian way and must consult and convince their children regarding important decisions of their life but this, he pointed out, was lacking in Pakhtun culture.

Nearly half (14 out of 32) of my respondents criticised Asma's father's attitudes and saw him as traditional and a trouble maker. For example, Gul Muhammad, a younger illiterate respondent, stated: 'Asma's father should have considered the will of his daughter instead of imposing his decision on her. Also he should not have considered Jahangir's family inferior.' One older educated respondent, Altaf, applauded their courage and considered it a good sign for change but also wondered about the effects on the family and on the eloped couple. He said: 'I think love marriages in our society require courage and it involves a big risk because it has severe implications for the lives of both bride and bridegroom as well as for the honour of the families. In my opinion this was a good and bold step to marry in the court and good thing to change the old fashioned terrible tradition.' Another older literate respondent, Nasruddin, criticised their action and thought it brought vulgarity to society. He told me that women are expected to endure and obey. Grima

(1991) in her study of Pakhtun society mentions that displaying a capacity to endure trouble is an important source of honour for Pakhtun women.

In Pakhtun culture a marriage contracted without a family's consent is widely considered demeaning. The prevailing pattern is that the boy's family should ask the girl's family for their daughter's hand in marriage in the presence of or through some respectable men which sometimes involves long haggling among the parties (Barth 1959; Marsden 2007). Overruling this process, particularly by the women, means contempt of the elders' authority and dishonouring the family. Women are killed in the name of 'honour' when they are in love with a person of whom the family disapproves (Khan 2000: 7). This is what the father of Asma was trying to do when he sought to kill both Jahangir and Asma to restore his honour in the community.

However, 25 out of 32 of my respondents condemned the honour killing intention of Asma's father and thought it un-Islamic but correct in the context of Pakhtun traditions. For example, Yar Muhammad, an older illiterate respondent, said:

I think he is doing Pakhto and stuck to traditions to kill his girl, he will restore his honour...Although, Sharia condemns it...and it is of course ignorance but can we avoid our traditions? To live inside the Pakhtun community, one has to do it. I think for the sake of others he does un-Islamic deeds and takes the risk of going to hell. It is ridiculous in my mind.

He further told me that we sometimes do not deliberately want to commit un-Islamic actions but due to fear and pressure from the community and labelling as a *begherat* (dishonoured person), one has to act in accordance with Pakhto tradition. In Pakistani society, for example, Marsden (2007: 100) argues that there is no greater shame in life than if one's daughter elopes in marriage. Joseph (1994) also mentions

this in the context of the Chitral society of north Pakistan, which is very similar in social structure to Pakhtun society. It is said that a well-educated (Ismaili) man did not visit the village's bazaar for five years after his sister eloped with a Sunni man (Marsden 2007).

Since *gherat* (honour) signifies real manhood and constructs the basis of hegemonic masculinity, specifically in relation to *namus* (women's pride), of a Pakhtun, this legitimises either killing the eloped couple or settling the matter through the Jirga, for example through *swara* marriages as in the above vignette. This, as I shall discuss below, makes the life of *swara* women hell. Coomaraswamy (2003: 207) argues that women in honour cases are never given an opportunity to give their version of events: 'often the making of the allegation alone suffices to defile a man's honour and, concomitantly, to justify killing the women.' However, the Musharraf regime in 2000 condemned honour killings as murder and against Sharia and basic human rights (Perveen 2009), but they still prevail because of deeply entrenched traditions and the lack of influence of the state in rural and remote areas (Patel and Gadit 2008).

The custom of exchange (*badal*) marriages and domestic violence

The custom of exchange marriages locally called *badal* or *adal badal* is an important reason for domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. Exchange marriage are practised for different reasons: to avoid dowry as both sides are in an equal position or to get another wife through the exchange of one's sister or daughter (Niaz 2003: 178; Jacoby and Mansuri 2010: 1809); to strengthen family bonds or to settle disputes among close agnatic kin (Ahmed 1980: 254). Sometimes a woman is

exchanged by taking money or any other kind of property. This type of exchange marriage has now to some extent disappeared but it is occasionally practised in the tribal areas and among the Pakhtuns of Afghanistan, according to Ghulam, an older illiterate respondent. Altaf, an older educated respondent, said:

In my view *badal* (exchange) marriages in our culture are problematic and can lead to exchange violence against women. Actually the internal family conflicts, in case of endogamous marriages, can influence the husband-wife relations and sometimes lead to enmity and family conflicts.

Revenge which is an essential part of Pakhtun behaviour is often reciprocated in exchange marriages, i.e. violence for violence. Sarzamin, an older educated respondent, told me that in case of intra-family conflicts and if there are endogamous marriages among them which he thought were mostly exchange (*adla badle*), violence would be inevitable. He stated: ‘you know, in case of *badal* (exchange) marriages, if somebody does violence to the woman, she complains to her brother or mother and thus the same behaviours and actions are supposed to occur with the other woman.’ In their study of exchange marriage (*watta satta*) in Pakistan, for example, Jacoby and Mansuri (2010: 1804) have shown that exchange marriages which account for about a third of all marriages in rural Pakistan, are more than just an exchange of women. They also establish the shadow of a mutual threat across the marriages. In this arrangement, a husband who ‘mistreats’ his wife in certain ways can expect his brother-in-law to retaliate in kind against his sister. Women here figure as objects, including as objects of violence, through which families balance their relations.

The custom of polygamy and domestic violence

Polygamy is practised throughout the Muslim world and Africa and considered to be one of the factors contributing to domestic violence (Shurtleff and Goddard 2005: 4). In Pakistan, no official data exist on the prevalence of polygamy. However, around five percent of married men are estimated to be involved in polygamous relationships (Hayat 2006). Polygamy is legally permitted in Sharia, but under certain strict pre-conditions. Badawi (1998) asserts that polygamy is neither mandatory, nor encouraged, but merely permitted in Islam, and dealing justly with one's wives is an obligation. This applies to housing, food, clothing, kind treatment etc., for which the husband is fully responsible. However the majority of men that decide to take on more than one wife rarely obtain consent and the required letter of permission from the first wife (Ibid).

All of my interviewees stated that women living in polygamous relationships face more domestic violence than women living in monogamous relations. For example, Naeem Khan, a younger educated respondent, who had many relatives in polygamous marriages, stated:

Obviously polygamy leads to exploitation and abuse of women because it is difficult for men [poor] to do justice among the wives...usually the younger wife has a respectable status compared to the older wife in our society... because of the slandering and jealousy among wives a man has to use violence to control them.

This view was echoed by many of my other respondents as well. In polygamous marriages men usually love and care more for the (younger) wife of their choice and ignore the interests and rights of the older wife and her children. This often leads to mutual conflicts among the wives and to establish order in the family the husband

commits violence. Not only do women face torment but also the husband in a polygamous marriage lives in a mess and leads a miserable life according to Altaf, an older educated respondent. Sarzamin, an older literate respondent, stated: 'Men having more wives are usually not happy men but they do not express their grief to others due to shame.' Since divorce is considered a taboo in Pakhtun culture, both men and women instead of divorcing endure living in violent relations. It is in this sense that women may be killed either in the name of honour or disguised as a suicide or through stove burning when the husband is not happy with his wife or wants a woman of his choice, according to some of the respondents.

However, a woman in polygamous marriage is at a lower risk of violence when she lives in a separate house, supported by her children and natal family members, has a job and is not dependent on her husband, and if her husband is a wealthy man and can meet the demands of both or all of his wives. But women living together with their *ban(s)* (the other wife of her husband) and in case both have children and are dependent, then domestic violence and family tension are inevitable, according to my respondents. Rahmat Zada, a younger educated respondent, had the experience of living in a polygamous environment. He added that polygamy is a curse and a bad custom unless there is some serious problem with the first wife.

In Pakhtun culture men usually re-marry for a variety of reasons, for instance, if the first wife is barren, because of a desire for a son or more sons, if the first marriage is not of his choice and arranged by his parents and without his consent, if the wife is lazy and not up to his standard, if the wife has got some disease and cannot fulfil his sexual desires, if the first marriage is a levirate marriage, and for lust. However, usually men, particularly influential and rich, practise polygamy for sexual reasons

and to have more options of and a variety of wives which is considered a symbol of honour and virility. One might agree that serial, successive marriages in the west operate in a similar way but without exposing the wife to violence in quite the same way.

The custom of swara marriages and domestic violence

In Pakistani society, domestic violence against women is perpetrated through a traditional marriage custom called 'swara' (Usafzai 2005; Amin 2006). Under this custom a girl, often below puberty and through the Jirga decision, is given in marriage to a rival family as compensation for murder and blood-money, adultery, abduction and kidnapping committed by any male of the girls' family (Usafzai 2005). Thus women in a swara marriage are sacrificed for the crime committed by their father, brothers or uncle, as illustrated in the vignette of Jahangir and Asma. However, almost all of my respondents, in relation to the vignette of Asma and Jahangir, condemned the Jirga decision of a swara marriage of Jahangir's sister and thought it against Sharia. Swara, they thought, not only belittled the status of Jahangir's sister but also made her vulnerable to a perpetual state of insult and agony where domestic violence is inevitable. For example, one of my younger educated respondents, Naeem Khan, said:

...the decision of the Jirga was ridiculous and against the law and Islam...why the innocent sister of Jahangir should be punished for her brother's deeds...This made the life of Jahangir's sister hell. Instead of swara the Jirga council should have compensated Asma's father by money, land or should have exiled Jahangir and Asma from the village forever.

This view was also articulated by other respondents. Some questioned the impartiality of the Jirga members as favouring the influential and wealthy party, as

in this case, for example, where it took the side of Asma's father. However, some respondents spoke in favour of this custom. For example, Hamid, a younger educated respondent, mentioned that it converts enmity and bloodshed into friendship and said that 'a woman is a symbol of honour for Pakhtuns no matter whether she is married through swara or any other way'. Further, in support of his argument Hamid said: 'as none of the elders here ask the consent of their daughters regarding their marriages and do not give them inheritance, I do not understand why certain organizations and media are after the issue of swara and portray it as a harmful tradition instead of projecting its positive side of settling disputes and transforming enmities into friendships...then why do these organizations not campaign so vigorously against the dowry custom, male dominance and women's lack of political and economic rights which I think are more oppressive to women than swara?' The practice of swara was originally used to end feuds, given that establishing blood ties could possibly put an end to the enmity among families. However, the treatment meted out to the swara woman is really deplorable in Pakistani society (Usafzai 2005). Thus swara is a harmful practice because it denies the autonomy of the girl and encourages the objectification of women and their lack of self-determination.

In swara marriages a woman faces more violence when she is married to an already married man because she has lower status than the other wife and her husband and his family members consider her a slave whom they can abuse because she reminds them of the murder of their family member or the shame and dishonour of their family, as Faqir Muhammad, one of my older illiterate respondents, said. Since a swara woman is taken as compensation and without the choice of her husband so he sometimes contracts another marriage of his choice which certainly increases the

troubles of swara women. Usafzai (2005) comments that once a girl is given away as swara there is little chance of a happy life for her for there is no honour for such girls.

Although swara is officially forbidden in Pakistan because the introduction of section 310A in the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) in 2004 declared exchanging females for peace a penal offence punishable by up to ten years of imprisonment, the custom still largely prevails in Pakhtun culture (Ebrahim 2006; Shah 2010). Despite the government's action against this, for example, Samar Minnalah (2006, cited in Amin 2006) reported 60 cases of swara in just two settled districts of Swabi and Mardan in a year. If the settled areas show such a high frequency of swara marriages, despite the fact that there is a high literacy rate, it may be even higher in tribal and rural areas which are beyond the reach of the government and where the Pakhtunwali is still strictly observed.

The custom of dowry (*jaheez*): a source of domestic violence

In South Asia the custom of *jaheez*³⁶ (dowry) contributes to the occurrence of domestic violence, considered 'dowry violence' or 'dowry deaths' (Karlekar 1998; Sharma 2008; Perveen 2010b). In Pakistan there are no official data on dowry violence and dowry deaths. However, Shahnaz Bukrai, the founder of an Islamabad-based women's association, reported 17000 cases of women who had been subjected to dowry related violence and killing, often disguised as suicide or stove burning

³⁶ Jaheez (dowry) customs vary in different regions and from family to family but in Pakhtun culture they usually consist of jewellery, household goods such as furniture, bedding, kitchen stuff and electronic goods such as TV, washing machine, refrigerator, as well as a new apartment, car and money in the case of a rich family.

(Sarfaraz 2008). It is due to the burden of dowry that a girl-child is less welcome than a male child in the family (Karlekar 1998; Terzieff 2004). For example, Multan Shah, one of my older literate respondents, who had five daughters, three married and two yet to be married, and two sons, revealed his worries about his daughters. He said:

I think daughters bring more tension compared to sons. Parents are worried about the future of their daughters, who will marry them, how much dowry they will need, what will be the status of the son-in-law and how they will be treated by the in-laws.

A family with more daughters has to pay a considerable amount of *jaheez*. This can cause financial disaster for the family but it is necessary for their daughter's well-being. A dowry though exorbitant, can secure women's security in the husbands' home (Bates et al. 2004: 191). Parents often take a loan or sell their property to marry off their girls. This could be one of the reasons why a woman with more daughters usually faces more domestic violence compared to woman with more sons, according to the majority (27 out of 32) of my respondents. I was even told that women are sometimes killed when they produce more daughters. For example, one of my older illiterate respondents, Faqir Muhammad, said: 'one of my friends told me that in their village a man shot his wife after giving birth to a third daughter. I think it is ignorance and against humanity.' Due to the pressure of the dowry, girl children are not welcomed and female infanticide and female feticide may be the result (Sayah 2011), as well as to the practice of exchange marriage (Jacoby and Mansuri 2010).

It is worth mentioning that Sharia emphasizes dower³⁷ or *mahr* (bridal gift) instead of a dowry and without payment of a dower a marriage cannot be formalized. In fact, *mahr*, when owned by a woman and worth a lot, can give (financial) security and a sense of empowerment to the wife who can more easily walk away from a battering relation and demand a divorce. But *mahr*, in the majority of the cases, has been used merely as a religious obligation to solemnize the marriage and more ironically it often benefits the husband and his family and not the woman. In Pakhtun culture women are sometimes morally convinced or even forced to gift the *mahr* to the husband, because the jewellery has been borrowed or rented for the event and needs to be returned after a wife gives it to the husband and becomes the property of the joint household (Barth 1959: 37). Thus *mahr*, basically aimed to protect women and give them financial security, has been widely misused in Pakhtun culture and its prompt gifting back to the husband impedes women from getting economic independence and thus makes their escape from a violent relationship impossible. Similarly the denial of women's rights to inheritance by Pakhtuns can be argued is a source of encouraging the perpetration of domestic violence against women. I shall now turn to this.

The denial of women's inheritance rights: a reason of domestic violence

The majority of my interviewees, 26 out of 32, agreed that women had a right of inheritance and thought it a religious obligation but said that practically people seldom gave this right to women. For example, Khushdil Khan, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'None of the Khan in our area has given their sisters inheritance.'

³⁷ Dowry or *mahr* is an Islamic tradition in which an endowment is given by the husband either in cash, property, and land or in jewellery and in other forms to the bride.

Nasruddin, another older but educated respondent, stated: ‘I have seen religious leaders and Mullas not giving women their inheritance and other rights ordained by Sharia.’ He further told me that usually people, particularly natal family members, morally pressurise their sisters to gift their share and when they do not do this, the brothers withdraw their support and think it is a disgrace and that they are stealing the property. He said that women are illiterate and not aware of their rights or do not claim it because of the family honour and due to the fear of losing the support of their natal family members.

Pakhtun people deny or seldom give women inheritance (Ahmed 1980: 295; Minallah et al. 2009: 33). Sometimes a dowry is considered as compensation for women’s share in the property. But often women withdraw their legal rights to inheritance due to family pressure. If they approach a court of law to claim their share in inheritance or refuse to give up their legal rights to inheritance they sometimes get killed or tortured (Minallah et al. 2009: 33). Since land in Pakhtun society is a source of power and [political] influence (Barth 1959: 74, 93), ‘the reluctance to give women their share in property [land] may well be tied up with the importance of fixed geographical areas inhabited and associated with sections and clans, parts of which would run the risk of alienation through the marriage of women if they inherited property’ (Ahmed 1980: 106). Endogamous marriages, for example, are also intended to stop the fragmentation of property (Barth 1959: 40). Likewise, *badal* (the exchange of a woman for a woman) marriages also have the advantage of mutual denial of women’s share in property between the families, according to my interviewees.

The denial of women's inheritance rights which influences the socioeconomic status of women makes women dependent on men and so they have difficulty leaving violent relations (Levinson 1989). Women's inheritance rights can have significant influence on women's status, their economic conditions and domestic authority (Mumtaz 2007: 151). Studies in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh have found an inverse association of domestic violence with women's right of landholding, greater control over resources and participation in credit programmes (Jejeebhoy and Cook 1997; Schuler et al. 1998; Fikree and Bhatti 1999: 198; Kabeer 2001; Koenig et al. 2003: 279; Fikree et al. 2005: 51).

The socio-economic and educational conditions of the family influence domestic violence

Studies have linked domestic violence with poverty, lower socioeconomic conditions and unemployment (Heise 1998; Karlekar 1998; Fikree and Bhatti 1999: 198; Khan 2000: 7; Blanchet 2001: 7; Krug et al. 2002; Khan and Hussain 2008; Naeem et al. 2008; Rabbani et al. 2008). It is estimated that approximately one-third (40 per cent) or 62 million people live below the poverty line in Pakistan (Hoti 2010; Zafar 2010; Farhan 2011). This widespread poverty and hunger in Pakistan has a direct impact on household relations and can influence the perpetration of domestic violence against women.

My data also confirm this. The majority of the men I interviewed, (26 out of 32), mentioned that poor and unemployed men are more frustrated and thus more inclined to violence. For example, Yar Muhammad, an older illiterate respondent, said: 'so far I have observed domestic violence is the business of poor people.'

However, rich men also commit domestic violence against women but the main difference between them and poor peoples' violence is the form and frequency of violence, according to Naeem Khan, an educated literate respondent. He said that rich and educated people often use verbal abuse and mental torturing but quite intermittently while poor people commit physical violence and do not know any other method to solve their problems but use the stick (*lawar or dange*). This means every man in Pakhtun culture is a potential perpetrator of domestic violence. However, the frequency and intensity of such violence is likely to be more common among the poor people compared to rich. At least, this is how my interviewees saw it.

As poor people, who in the majority of cases are also illiterate, have usually got large families, and due to the high prices, scarcity of jobs, and low wages in joint families, it is therefore hard for them to sustain the family with food and other necessities of life. This can lead to frustration, according to my respondents. The home, as the private sphere, is considered to be the best place for releasing the frustration because women are dependent, illiterate and cannot challenge men's authority. Zia ur Rahman, an older educated respondent, said that *riwajona* (customs) have become expensive and now beyond the reach of a poor man because it needs a lot of money and gifts to participate in the *gham-ao-khadi* (sorrows and joys or happiness) of others. He told me that as women in Pakhtun society only have the *gham-khadi* occasions to gather and chat, when a man is unable to allow his wife to participate in such activities, it can provoke a woman and she taunts and argues with the husband which he thought can lead to her abuse. Again, it is noteworthy that the interviewees rarely thought that women might have good cause for complaint.

Ahmed (1998) in a seminar regarding men's issues in Pakistan reported that men feel tremendous stress in order to prove their masculinity in terms of providing for their family as well as protecting the honour of the family. Pillai (2001: 970) argues that when men are unable to provide for their families, they feel a loss of power and control and thus start taking their frustration out on the women and children at home. According to Heise (1998: 274-75), 'poverty is likely to generate stress, frustration, and a sense of inadequacy in some men for failing to live up to their culturally defined role of provider. It may also operate by providing ready fodder for marital disagreement and/or by making it more difficult for women to leave violent or otherwise unsatisfactory relationships'. Heise's assertion is true in the context of Pakistani women because women being poor and dependent cannot walk away from violent partners. Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) comments that women in Pakistan have no or limited access to and control over economic resources which according to Naeem et al. (2008: 260) can lead to their low self-esteem so that they do not report violence because they see no point in doing so. Heise (1998: 275) reports that 'the impact of economic deprivation on wife abuse is partially mediated through increasing marital conflict.'

In developing countries, particularly in the Muslim population, domestic violence against women has a direct link with the low literacy rate which in turn influences the socioeconomic conditions of the family and society as a whole (Haj-Yahia 1998a; Martin et al. 1999; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Koenig et al. 2003). The estimated illiteracy rate in Pakistan is 44.0% (16.1% for males and 27.9% for females) (Hayat 2009: 45). The situation in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, particularly regarding women's education, is even worse because of the biased attitudes towards

female education such as it is harmful and contaminates society and because of the threats of the Taliban (Khattak 2008; Waraich and Buncombe 2009).

However, all of my respondents favoured women's education and thought it important but due to poverty and socio-cultural factors such as women's early marriages, preference of males' education over female education because of their economic significance for the family, pressure of domestic work, and women's purdah, women can get no or only limited schooling in Pakhtun culture, as my interviewees explained. The majority of the interviewees (25 out of 32) described the low literacy rate of both men and women as one of the major causes of domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. Among them 16 respondents linked the low literacy rate with poverty as well. For example, Omar Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'I think matrimonial violence is higher among illiterate couples because they don't know the rights of each other and have no plan for life.' Faqir Muhammad, an older illiterate interviewee, stated: 'In my mind illiterate people are more violent because they are rigid, have no rational thinking and planning for their work. They just eat, drink, sleep and behave like animals and are not aware the rights of others.' Nadar, a younger illiterate respondent, told me that illiterate people have short vision and are more violent because they are ignorant and always stick to their rigid attitudes. He said: 'Illiterate people like me don't have the mind to understand things and tackle the issues tactfully but just believe in aggression.' Although these were perceptual biases, they were held by a significant number of the men I interviewed.

Some respondents considered an educated wife a blessing and mentioned that an educated woman has the aptitude to tackle problems, is better able to organize things, and takes better care of the children compared to illiterate women. Januallh, an older uneducated respondent, said: 'If we and our women were educated, there

would be no conflicts and domestic abuse and our homes would be paradise.’ This was echoed by many other respondents. Education of both men and women is the distinguishing factor between the poor and the non-poor, and more important the mother’s education is critical for ensuring daughters’ education (Mumtaz 2007: 150). There are studies which suggest that the lower the level of a man’s education the greater the tendency to justify wife beating (Haj-Yahia 1998b). Fikree et al. (2005: 52) found that wives with no formal education were nearly five times more likely to be physically abused than wives with some formal education. Koenig et al. (2003: 279) in a study in Bangladesh found the education of both the husband and the wife as lowering the risk of domestic violence. Thus it can be argued that education not only broadens one’s vision, enables individuals to know their rights but also leads to harmonious life with planning and dignity. This minimizes the chances of their vulnerability to domestic violence.

Overall, in this chapter my interview data showed that the Pakhtun family structure is very complex. However, from a gender perspective it is the central place for perpetuating women’s subordination, articulated through gender disparity in preferring sons over daughters, unequal allocation of resources and authority to males and females, denial of inheritance and other basic rights to women. Since the Pakhtun family structure is dominated, in every aspect, by a (senior) man, and as women, being structurally inferior and positioned at the bottom of social hierarchy, have little or no autonomy, this contributes to the possibility of domestic violence against women. The joint or extended family structure is more oppressive to women because of the preference of natal relations over conjugal bonds and the opportunity that the joint family system provides for more people to perpetrate domestic violence than only one, the husband, in the nuclear set-up. Since women (wives) are

seen as a potential threat to the unity of joint living, it requires that men, in order to uphold their *saritoob* (manhood) and *gherat* (self honour), must have tight control over them. For this, it is permissible not only for the husband but also for the in-laws to be violent to women deviating from their traditional roles.

My data then highlighted that marriage traditions of the Pakhtuns are also oppressive to women. In fact, it is through the bond of marriage that a man gets the (permanent) mastery of his woman and can do whatever he wants with her. Also my data showed that women, because of their lack of economic and social advantage for the family, are considered a liability and parents, due to the fear of shame and the honour factor, get them married off at an early age as well as use them like a commodity and for settling their disputes and restoring of men's and the family's honour. The men in my study thought that the socio-economic background of the family can influence the perpetration of domestic violence. In this regard educated women were admired and thought less likely to face domestic violence compared to illiterate women because they can handle things in a better way, they are more aware of their as well others' rights, and have relatively more access to spaces and redress. However, the men I interviewed also thought that women due to the fear of bringing shame to the family, the fear of further jeopardizing their lives instead of healing, and due to the lack of proper facilities and support at the state level, do not expose their vulnerability to others but endure.

In the next chapter I investigate spatialization in Pakhtun society. I analyse how spatiality operates and intersects with the social factors of gender, ethnicity, age, and contributes to the construction of gender disparity, gender segregation, asymmetrical power relations among individuals, and facilitates the perpetration of domestic violence against women.

Chapter 5: GENDER SPATIALIZATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN PAKHTUN SOCIETY

Introduction

Spatialization according to Shields (1991: 46) represents ‘spatial suppositions’. This refers to the ‘cultural edifice of perceptions and prejudices, images of places, materials and positions, and the establishment of certain performative codes related to practices and modes of social interaction in appropriate settings or sites’ (Shields 1991: 46). Social spaces in society are the outcome of economic and political practices (Shields 1991; Koskela 1999). For instance, Harvey (1973) sees spaces as a result of the capitalistic mode of production as evident in different economic classes. However, these are also shaped by gender, race, age, class, ethnicity, religion, and social status in a given social structure (Jamal 2005: 298). Spatialization can therefore be described as the outcome of a multiplicity of practices (Massey 1994; Simonsen 1996; Flood and Pease 2005: 124), influenced by a complex system of power relations among individuals (Koskela 1999: 111), allocating to each person a place and to each place a person (Foucault 1984: 237). In Pakhtun culture such spatialization is highly evident. Individuals have certain places, status, positions, and privileges defined by a system of power and social practices entrenched in the behavioural code of the Pakhtuns. Further, spatialization in Pakhtun society exists not only in the dichotomy of ‘public’ and ‘private’ spaces, but it, as I shall discuss, also exists in a complex manner inside these spaces supposedly designated for men and women. That complexity may best be expressed through

Crenshaw's (1991: 1250) notion of 'intersectionality,' since it is the effect and production of spatial divisions as a result of the intersection of multiple, including social factors. I shall argue that the particular ways in which spatialization operates in Pakhtun culture promotes and sustains violence, particularly domestic violence against women.

Gender spatialization: a prominent feature of Pakhtun society

Pakhtun society is characterised by a particular system of gender spatiality. All of my respondents were aware of this. For instance, Nadar, a young illiterate respondent, said:

Men in our society occupy the public sphere, hold more authority, and move free like eagles, while women occupy the private or domestic space of the home, restricted to the *chardewari* (four walls) of the household, and cannot go outside the home but with men's permission.

This view was echoed by the majority of my respondents. Nadar's statement provides a clear account of gender spatialization in Pakhtun society. In Pakhtun culture there exist, at least in theory, distinct and segregated spaces for men and women. The public sphere is viewed as the men's space. It is considered open and supposedly provides the opportunity for free mobility as described in the notion of moving 'free like eagles'. It is worth noting here however that different categories of men have different ability to move freely. For example, a patriarch who enjoys absolute authority in the household is often not accountable for his movements and actions to the other (dependent) household members, but junior men's movements and actions are strictly monitored. Usually in Pakhtun culture staying outside the

house after dusk is rare, and juniors are constantly admonished for their late return home, as Omar Khan, one of my younger illiterate respondents, stated. This means that access to spaces can be different for different categories of men. This, for example, is visible in the reservation of the first line in mosques and the front seats of vehicles for seniors or respectable and influential men in Pakhtun culture. Further, Nadar described space as a place of power and authority. In contrast, the domestic space, traditionally symbolizing the women's space, was seen as narrow and closed, restricted to the four walls of the house (*chardewari*), and subordinated to the public or men's space. Nadar also said that women cannot go outside of their allotted space but with men's permission, otherwise they face violence, and even killing in case of extreme transgression of traditions which can jeopardise men's and their family's honour. My respondents were clear about this.

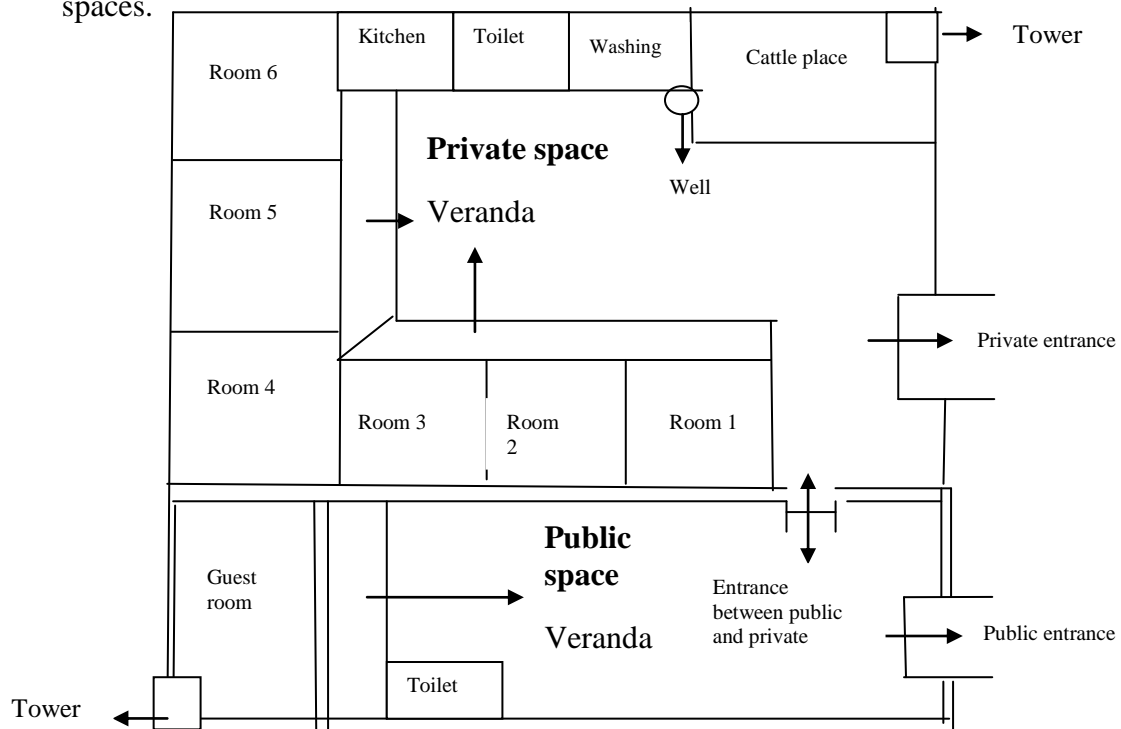
Sadiqi and Ennaji (2006: 87) argue that in some [patriarchal] societies the private/public dichotomy of spaces is constructed so rigidly that they are thought as mutually exclusive. This is the case in Muslim societies in general and Pakhtun society in particular because the gender dichotomy of spaces is strictly emphasized by both Sharia and the Pakhtun honour code (Boesen 1983; Nelson 1974). In Pakhtun society this is often articulated through the notion that *sare da bahar ao khaze da kor de* (men have to do the public sphere business while women have to do the domestic sphere work). Boesen (1983: 4) in this regard notes that 'men dominate the "public" sphere, the economic, political, and social life outside the household; and women lead a retired existence confined to the domestic realm of home and family'. The gender dichotomy of spaces, particularly the narrowness of women's space is reflected in a popular Pakhto proverb '*khaza ya da kor da ya da gor da* (a woman's best place is either the house or the grave)' used by some of my

respondents. This proverb according to Boesen (1983: 4) ‘conveys the image of women as controlled beings who should stay at home, work, and bear children...if the woman breaks the rules of the game, her life is worth little—her husband is entitled to kill her’. This represents a general image of the gender structure in Pakhtun society, and it is well understood by both men and women (Boesen, 1983: 5).

However, I suggest that there is a distinction between how these gender spaces are conceptualized in the abstract and how they are experienced in actuality in Pakhtun culture. This could best be demonstrated in the Pakhtun household arrangement and division of labour, which I shall now outline.

The gender-space dichotomy in Pakhtun culture is evident in the structural principles of the household arrangements as shown in the Figure 10.

Figure 10. A typical Pakhtun joint household model showing public and private spaces.



Source: Drawing by the author.

The above diagram attempts to illustrate the gender dichotomization of space operates in a typical Pakhtun household. Although, the household structure in Pakhtun society depends to some extent upon the area in which it is set (rural and urban), and on the socio-economic status of the family, a clear division, as the double line in the figure above shows, separates private from public space (the latter is usually called the *hujra* or *betak*). The private space of the household is called *kor* (house), usually surrounded by a fence called *chardewari* (four walls) which symbolizes the primary law of seclusion (*satar* or *purdah*) for women. The public space of the household, the *hujra*, *betak*, or *deera*, symbolises the political status and other vital aspects of Pakhtun social activities, such as providing hospitality for male guests and conducting Jirgas (Ahmed 1980: 223). The domestic space includes the kitchen and grain store, a washing place, a cattle space, and the well, considered culturally as women's sites. Women are not allowed into the public space of the household in the presence of guests. They, in order to uphold their *purdah*, are often cautioned not to speak loudly when the *betak* is located inside the private space and separated by just a door. Otherwise, they face abuse and violence, as Rahmat Zada, one of my younger literate respondents, said.

Young unmarried females usually sleep in separate rooms, but children below puberty sleep in their parents' rooms. Young unmarried males usually use the *hujra* or *betak* as a dormitory. A gateway between the public and private spaces of the house is used for the male members of the household. Stranger males and distant male relatives are not allowed to cross the double line. The fact that certain males can cross this divide already indicates as permeability of these boundaries which makes their actual use complex. The private entrance ensures the privacy of the females and male members of the household to the house (Ahmed 1980). Female

visitors stay inside the private space of the house and are usually served by the female members of household while male visitors stay in the public space of hujra and are entertained by the male members of the household. A room in the private space is usually allocated as a common sitting place, particularly in the winter season, where food is served, and family matters are discussed. Here specific sitting sites are allocated to men, women and children depending upon their age and social position in the family. However, this arrangement differs in Pakhtun culture depending upon the location, size, and structure of the family. In the joint family setup, men usually take their meal first, followed by the women and children.

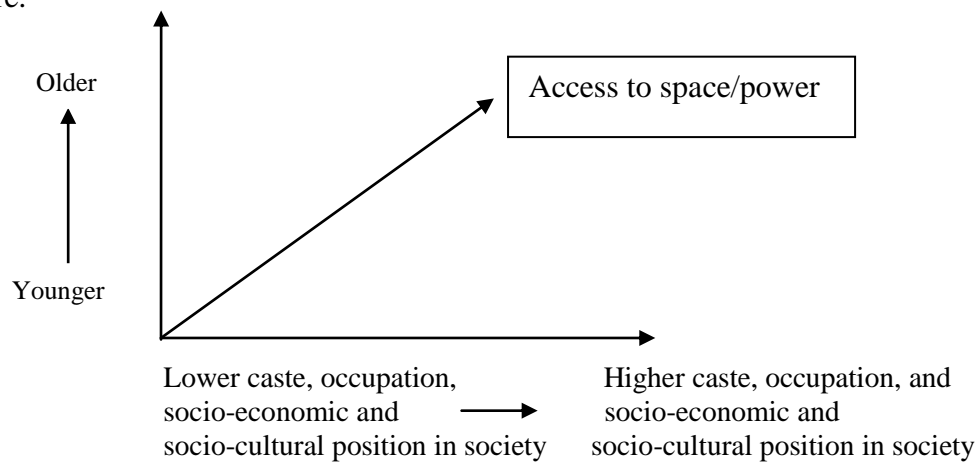
In Pakhtun society access to and the use of spaces are largely influenced by gender and by the notions of *mashar-kashar* (seniorhood-juniorhood). For instance, senior men have greater access to spaces, but the patriarch must occupy the centre chair and place, he must walk ahead of his sons, and his decisions and views must be honoured by other (dependent) family members. This means women and junior men, being culturally and religiously lower in the hierarchy, are subject to (senior) men's authority and have a different access to space. The women's spaces are culturally recognized as less powerful and completely subordinated to the male spaces and this, Boesen (1983: 108) notes, is because of the 'males control of the means of subsistence, their control of land and reproductive resources and their monopoly of all jobs and in connection with trade and services, since these are located in the "public sphere".' This means men are culturally dominant and they, not only at the domestic but also at wider societal level as they dictate the law, lead the businesses, and occupy the managerial positions. Research confirms that women's limited access to spaces and authority positions not only reduces their autonomy and power but also make them vulnerable to violence (Heise 1998; Koskela 1999; Sonpar and Kapur

2001; Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006). However, gender-space segregations are more complex and more blurred than the private and public descriptions suggest and interact in a dynamic way so that one does not exist without the other (Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006). This can be understood through taking an intersectional view of the gender-spaces.

The intersectionality of gender-spaces and domestic violence

The concept of ‘intersectionality’ has been used to analyse the ways in which gender intersects with other identity categories e.g. race, ethnicity, religion, age, and with the social, economic, political and legal structures that contribute to discrimination, oppression, privilege, and perpetuate domestic violence against women (Crenshaw 1991; Bograd 1999; Association for Women’s Rights in Development 2004; Nixon and Humphreys 2010; Creek and Dunn 2011). Drawing on Crenshaw’s (1991) conception of intersectionality, I think gender-space in Pakhtun culture can be viewed from an ‘intersectional perspective’ which takes account of the multiplicity and intersectionality that shapes the criteria according to which social categories are produced. Particular values are attached to these categories. On the basis of these, social hierarchies are constructed, power negotiated, access to space is granted, and (domestic) violence perpetuated. In this regard gender-space politics in Pakhtun culture can be argued to be the outcome of complex interactions of gender, age, caste or occupation, ethnicity, economic, political, and religious status. These determine one’s power and access to space in Pakhtun culture as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11. The access to space/power shows a linear association between the age structure and the socio-cultural and socio-economic status of a person in Pakhtun culture.



Source: Drawing by the author.

A person in Pakhtun society usually gets greater access to spaces, both in the domestic and public, and other privileges such as authority and respect as s/he ages. It is important to note that girls, particularly below the age of puberty, and older women, i.e. above 60 years, have relatively greater access to public spaces because *satar* (purdah) does not strictly apply to them. But compared to boys and men they still have less access. Older women, particularly the mother, might have greater power and access to space inside the home and sometimes in the public sphere as well, but like men they do not have complete access to authority structures such as the Jirga—the council of (male) elders. Similarly older men of respectable families have greater influence, power, and more access to spaces and authority structures, for example the Jirga, compared to men of lower castes and occupational groups. This means access to spaces is influenced not only by the age of a person but also by his or her relative social status.

The categorization and spatialization of individuals according to Crenshaw (1991: 1297) is itself an exercise of power. Power in Pakhtun culture is clustered around

certain categories of individuals, both in public and domestic spaces. For instance, the senior men and senior female members of the household, and those who belong to respectable families and occupational groups have high social status (see chapter 3: 130). This impedes access to spaces and power apparatuses for those who are powerless, marginalized and or live in subordination. Women in this regard are the most disadvantaged group because of their gender. They not only have restricted access to spaces, but as a consequence of this, are also vulnerable to violence. That is women's segregation, due to purdah, to the domestic space—a major site for women's oppression (see e.g. Papanek 1973; Rose 1993; Pain 1997; Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006), means that they face obstacles in accessing public space—where redress may be sought and where violence may be adjudicated. Harris and Dewdney (1994) point out that women, in order to seek redress and because of their restricted access to public spaces, may not be aware of what services exist, or which agency to contact, or they may face obstacles such as bureaucratic complexities in accessing formal help. This is certainly the case in Pakhtun society. Here, due to the fear of bringing shame on the family, pressure from the family, lack of security and support from natal family members, and lack of facilities for battered women such as asylum centres, instead of reporting violence and seeking redress, women tend to endure the violence (Burney 1999; Khan and Hussain 2008).

Despite all this it is the case that women may access public spaces, for example, the street, the market place for shopping, agricultural fields in rural areas, and working as doctors, nurses, teachers etc. However, they cannot occupy or dominate the public spaces like men do. Rather they do their business and move on to their allocated space (the home). The practices, according to which they occupy public space, are highly prescriptive and differentiated according to age, class and location. On the

other hand, men may enter women's spaces, for instance, the kitchen, and can at least in theory perform tasks culturally assigned to women, such as child care, cooking, etc. However, they generally abstain from these (feminine) spaces and responsibilities because of the fear of being called a *Khazonak* (effeminate), which can pose a serious threat to one's masculinity and Pakhtunness. Men who do not comply with particular masculine norms are often targeted for ridicule and abuse (Flood and Pease 2005). It is through these specific policing practices that gender-spaces, roles, and identities are constructed and maintained.

Although women are largely excluded from the public sphere, they hold considerable authority in the domestic space. This is true as far as the role of women in the *gham-khadi* (sorrows and joys) domain of the family is concerned (Ahmed, 2006). For example, the mother and sisters play a crucial part in finding wives for their sons and brothers; they manage the domestic sphere in terms of dealing with women visitors in times of sorrows and joys.

Women can also influence men's spaces (public sphere) and they usually do so from their private positions (Lienhardt 1972). For instance, as discussed earlier, in the *gham-khadi* situation, women mix in large numbers consisting of closer and more distant kin and affines. This creates a network of communications that gets and provides information for and about their men, influences the decision-making of the family, particularly establishing alliances through marriage relations, and informs their men about what is happening in other families. In this sense the segregation of women is also an exclusion of men from a range of contacts which women have among themselves, and which can empower women in their space. This means that women's cooperation and active participation, in their respective social role, is

imperative in the household arrangements. Thus public and private spaces in this sense can be argued to interact with each other in a dynamic way and these are not fully segregated in Pakhtun culture as many suggest. However, in both spaces, men, as a social norm, are authoritarian in their relations to women. For instance, Gul Amin, one of my older illiterate respondents, told me that ‘without men’s financial support, permission, and company women cannot participate in the *gham-khadi* activities.’ Men in Pakhtun culture being cast as the protectors, earners, financiers and providers of the family dictate the terms of the domestic (women’s) sphere. Hamid, one of my educated younger respondents, said:

Although home is regarded as the women’s place and it is in this sense that a woman is often called *de kor malka* (a queen of the house)... But as far as I have seen women even within their allocated domain are not independent and are subject to their men’s or senior women’s authority.

This means that in theory domestic space is perceived to be women’s space giving them some power in their respective social roles of mothers, wives, sisters and daughters but they cannot act independently in their allotted space (the home) and have to get the approval and support of their men and senior women for the majority of their activities and getting access to spaces. Women’s access to spaces and authority positions in Pakhtun culture is therefore subject to men’s consent and approval, and men tend to be very restrictive in this because of the fear of losing their *namus* (women’s dignity and chastity) as well as the fear of losing their authority and domination over women. Since women’s sexual exclusiveness and chastity is a symbol of men’s honour, women become segregated and restricted to domestic space (Sonpar and Kapur 2001: 74). The vignette about Nadia clearly shows how difficult it is, even for an educated woman like Nadia, to negotiate access

to space in Pakhtun culture. Koskela (1999: 112) argues that violence and the fear of violence constantly modifies women's spatial realities.

It is important to note here that women's restricted access to spaces, particularly public space, in Pakistani society in general and Pakhtun society in particular is shaped by their fear [of male violence] of public space and by their conception, internalized through their socialization process, that they cannot win in the male dominated sphere. As Koskela (1999: 112) reports: 'living a spatially restricted life because of fear constantly reminds women of their relatively powerless position'. Koskela (1999: 112) notes that 'if women have the courage to go out, they make space more easily available for other women by their presence. By restricting their mobility because of fear of violence, women surely reproduce masculine domination over space'. Women in Pakistan generally perceive public space as unsafe where they can encounter stranger men (Ali 2010: 317), and the fear of their vulnerability to men's violence in the form of harassment and rape confines women to the domestic sphere (Valentine 1992; Koskela 1999; Kelkar 2005; Sadiqi and Ennaji 2006). Fear of violent attacks and sexual harassment reminds women that they are not meant to be in certain spaces (Rose 1993). It is mainly because of this fear [of violence] that many women spend their lives under 'a virtual curfew' (Kinsey 1984 in Pain 1997: 234). These factors contribute to 'women's geography of fear' in public spaces (Valentine 1989; Wesely and Gaarder 2004). However, research shows that women's vulnerability to violence is much higher in the domestic than in the public sphere (Dobash and Dobash 1992; Valentine 1992; Rose 1993; Hollander 2001). However, private or domestic violence can also make one more fearful in public space (Koskela 1999: 118). The two, vulnerability to violence in the home and fear of violence outside, mutually reinforce each other.

The spatialization of Pakhtun masculinity and domestic violence

Hearn and Morgan (1990: 11) argue that ‘men too within a patriarchal society experience subordination, stigmatization and marginalization as a consequence of their sexuality, age, ethnic identity, class position, ideology and marital status.’ This is the case in the context of Pakhtun society. The spatialization of Pakhtun masculinity intersects with the existing hierarchical structure which, as discussed earlier, influences not only men’s access to spaces, and powerful positions both in the public and domestic spheres, but it also, in a complex way, contributes to the construction of domestic violence against women. For example, some of my respondents described that because of their failure to fulfil their family responsibilities (e.g. earning and provision) or due their subordinate position in the public sphere, some (subordinate or marginalized) men are unable to challenge and compete with other (dominant, senior) men which makes them feel frustrated and stressed. Home for these frustrated men was thought to provide the best site for restoring their fragile masculinity. For instance, as inside the home these men have more power and authority than their women and children, when they assume or attribute anything unpleasant or undesirable to women such as disobedience or an inadequate performance of their domestic chores, they start abusing and beating their women. In this way, through the use of violence, these (subordinate) men on the one hand release their frustration, derived from the effects of their lower social status, while on the other hand it maintains their gender-based status, their virility and control over women. Ahmad (1998) notes that Pakistani men take great trouble to uphold their masculine role, for instance to prove their manhood in terms of providing the basic necessities for the family. If they fail in this, one outlet is violence against women at home.

Similarly, a man living in a joint family structure might hold power and authority in the public sphere, for instance working as a CEO in a company, but inside the home, he may be a son or a junior member of the family, and therefore lower in the power hierarchy than his parents or elder brothers and subject to their authority in household matters. But as a man he is more dominant and powerful than his wife in the domestic sphere, and therefore he can be violent to her if she is not obedient, or selected by the parents and not liked by him. Space, power, masculinity, and violence interact in a complex way in Pakhtun culture. Junior members of the family, recognized as low in the social hierarchy and socially and economically dependent on their seniors, find it hard to stand up to their elders' authority and decisions. This can lead to a conflicting position in relation to their masculinity among the young men and other socially subordinate family members, and mounting frustration and violent attitudes.

Bograd (1999: 277) argues that men who batter women exercise a certain form of patriarchal control at home. 'The patriarchal system not only produces gender inequality and privileges men over women but also normalizes the privileges of senior men over younger ones in a hierarchy that demands subservience, obedience, and respect from those lower in the hierarchy' (Sonpar and Kapur 2001: 76). In the Indian context, for example, Seymour (1999: 96) notes that subordinate and young men increasingly demand more autonomy in the family. Thus conflicts/clashes of interest between senior (*mashar*) and junior (*kashar*) men are common. Consequently, due to this conflict, the subordinate men can seek a more zealous control of the women (Sonpar and Kapur 2001: 76). In this sense the violence dominant men exert upon subordinate men is reproduced in violence by these subordinate men to women (wives). As Altaf, one of my older educated respondents

said using a Pakhto proverb, *oba pa kamzore ze matege* (water makes its way through a weak point). This means women, being inferior, weak and dependent on men are not only vulnerable to but also end up absorbing the violence and frustration men feel in relation to their experience in public spaces.

Thus gender-space politics in Pakhtun culture not only exists in and influences the (power) relations of men to women and vice versa, but also exists and influences masculine structure and hierarchies, initially through the age structure among men and then through their ethnic, occupational, economic, religious, political, and cultural determinants, which empower and privilege certain groups over others. Violence, both in the public and domestic sphere, is often used for maintaining these spaces among the different groups.

The internalization of gender spatialization in Pakhtun society

Spaces are socially constructed including in Pakhtun society, and different spaces and roles are internalized from very early stages in the lives of individuals. The internalization of spaces and roles takes place through the systematic process of socialization and experiences. The socialization process enables individuals to learn and behave according to the norms, values, patterns and culture of their society (Haralambus and Holborn 2002). In the socialization process initially the family and parents impart specific and different gender norms to their children. Socialization in this sense is a gender-biased process in Pakhtun society because it maintains a certain gender order internal to the family and to society, i.e. girls are inculcated with and prepared for domestic responsibilities, to remain submissive towards

elders, husbands and traditions, while boys are prepared for the outside world (public space) to earn, defend, control and to demonstrate toughness and bravado. Khan and Hussain's (2008) study conducted in Pakistan found the internalization of male superiority and privileges from a very early age.

One of the important tasks of adolescent socialization is to learn how to mobilize social networks, rather than how to become autonomous (Mensch et al. 2003). During adolescence boys negotiate a period of complete dependence and subordination to their parents, but are beginning to take on the privileges of manhood (ibid). On the other hand, due to the obligation of purdah, girls experience an abrupt end to the relative freedom and mobility they enjoyed in childhood (Ibrahim and Wassef 2000). Koskela's (1999: 111) argument is pertinent here that 'space is produced by gender relations, and reproduced in those everyday practices where women do not or dare not have a choice over their own spatial behaviour'. As Ghulam, one of my older illiterate respondents said: 'fears of public sphere as a dangerous and inappropriate place for women are internalized in the psyche of women, often through parental warnings'. Girls' activities outside the home are increasingly surveilled and restricted to the home as they reach adolescence. Around the time of puberty, girls are expected to display modesty, traditionally articulated in purdah, and to withdraw from some of the public spaces to which they had access as children (Mensch et al. 2003: 10). Roles become segregated and spatialized as they mature. Boys are likely to participate in paid labour while girls participate in domestic work within the household (Mensch et al. 2003: 10-11).

Karlekar (1998: 1742) argues that violence often becomes a tool to socialize family members according to prescribed norms of behaviour. Unsurprisingly, some of my

respondents explained that domestic violence against women is used to ensure that women conform to traditional patriarchal norms. Watan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'Pakhtuns constantly remind their younger and particularly their women of (the importance) their place and role and often use the *lawar* (stick or violence) for this purpose.' My respondents unquestioningly assumed that women needed to be reminded of their role and space and that such cultural transmission would involve the use of direct violence. Violence was considered to be one of the mechanisms used not only for subordinating women but for restricting them to the domestic sphere. Very few entertained the notion that one might discuss differences of opinion or behaviour as opposed to react violently against them.

According to Mosher and Tomkins (1988, cited in Heise 1998: 278), 'macho socialization works to increase violence by amplifying anger, and a lack of empathy'. Research from the 1980s and 1990s has shown that men raised in patriarchal families (that promote strict gender roles and spaces), are more likely to become violent adults, to rape women acquaintances, and to batter their intimate partners than men raised in more egalitarian homes (Riggs and O'Leary 1989; Malamuth et al. 1991; Dobash et al. 1992). Thus men are violent because of the way they view themselves in Pakhtun culture. As control over women is admired and constitutes the '*gherat*' (honour) of Pakhtun men, violence, justified by culture and religion, produces and reproduces specific gender spaces and roles.

Spatialization, the social division of work, and domestic violence

In Pakhtun culture gender socialization is articulated in the distribution of daily labour, granting specific tasks and spaces to individuals. The gendered division of

labour and responsibilities in Pakhtun culture creates and allocates different spaces and positions to men and women. All 32 of my respondents whether they were literate or not, old or young, described that men are responsible for (and should do) the work related to the public spaces, while women (should) do domestic chores or work related to private spheres. Men's responsibilities, the majority of which are related to the public space, as described by my respondents included: the earning of money and livelihood for the family through businesses, farming, working as labourers locally and abroad, the construction of the house; providing finances for the family's hospitalization and medication, providing clothes, financing the education and marriage expenditures of the household members; defending the (honour of the) family by having full control of the youngsters and female members of the household; and participating in public gatherings and community affairs, such as the Jirga, political movements, (tribal and family) conflicts and taking of revenge, burial ceremonies etc. The women's responsibilities were mostly restricted to the domestic or private sphere and include child-rearing, cooking, washing and ironing, cleaning, managing and milking the livestock, serving the husband and older in-laws, and taking care of household matters.

Different reasons were mentioned by my interviewees for this specific gender-space allocation of tasks. 25 out of 32 argued that their *deen* (religion) emphasizes this. That is men must sustain and protect women and the family. For example, Aatif, one of my younger educated respondents who had religious knowledge quoted a verse from the Qur'an in support of his statement. He said: 'the Qur'an says that men are the protectors and maintainers of the women (family), because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they (men) spend (to support them—women) from their wealth'. Further, he told me that as women are physically weak they

cannot take risks and do hard jobs. Douglas (1970) describes the social division of labour in Middle Eastern society in a rather similar way.

The social division of labour involves women less deeply than their men folk in the central institutions—political, economic, legal, administrative, etc. They are indeed subject to control. Mediated through fewer human contacts, their social responsibilities are more confined to the domestic space. This is a social condition they share with serfs and slaves. Their place in the public structure of roles is clearly defined in relation to some points of reference, say in relation to husbands, brothers and fathers. As for the rest of their social life, it takes place at the relatively unstructured interpersonal level, with other women...the network of relations a woman has with other women is delicate and unstructured...and its significance for society at large is less than the significance of men's relations with one another in the public role system (Douglas 1970: 84).

Douglas's assertion is relevant to Pakhtun society because women, as the majority (21 out of 32) of my respondents argued, are treated like servants and have no autonomy and independent identity. For instance, women's identity in the public sphere is recognized either through her father, brother or husband. A woman's name is usually not mentioned on her marriage invitation card; instead she is described through her relation to a man as Mr X's sister or Mr X's daughter. Further, women do have relations with other women but these are devalued and cannot be used for mutual support and redress.

It is argued that the reason for the gender dichotomy of spaces and responsibilities advocated by religious scholars is that men and women have been given different capabilities, physiques and potentials by their creator (Khalid 2000). (Pillai 2001: 969) argues that in the fear of losing power and control over women, men will do

anything to control it, often using religion for this purpose. Nearly half of my respondents (14 out of 32) mentioned the strict women's purdah system and the cultural notion of (men's) *gherat* (self dignity and honour) as the main reasons for the production of specific gender spaces and responsibilities in Pakhtun culture. For example, Omar Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, said: 'Our people consider it a great shame to unveil our women and to send them to earn. I think the best place for women is home, service of the husband and doing domestic work.' Sarzamin, one of my older educated respondents, said: 'Pakhtuns who breach this cultural code are often condemned and ridiculed as *begherat* [dishonoured] for their inability to support their women and families'. Like many of my other respondents, Waris Khan, a younger illiterate respondent, reiterated this view of the public taunts by referring to a Pashto proverb: '*da khalq ba sa waye* (what will the people say).' He told me that everyone in his heart condemns women's ill treatment and their restriction to specific spaces and roles but due to their fear of losing their *gherat* and *namus*, i.e. control of women people adhere to traditions and do not allow their women into public spaces to support the family.

However, some of my respondents, particularly the educated ones, not only criticized the strict gender division of spaces but also condemned the pattern of specific sex-role distribution in Pakhtun society. For instance, 15 out of 32 of my respondents (12 were educated and 3 were illiterate) emphasized that men should assist their women in domestic tasks and considered it does not bring any shame to men but instead they thought it a good sign for creating mutual trust and understanding. Similarly, 19 out of 32 of my respondents (11 were educated and 8 were illiterate) said that women should not be restricted to the domestic space but should be permitted to have jobs and participate even in politics, but within the premise of Pakhtun traditions and

Islamic principles. For instance, Altaf, one of my older educated respondents, said: 'I think women should be allowed to have a job provided that they can maintain their purdah and where women have least chances of mixing with stranger men'. Teaching and the medical profession were considered the most suitable professions for women.

Some educated respondents condemned old-fashioned attitudes and the rigid purdah culture and urged women's equal participation in all sectors as they considered it a need of the day and key to national development. For example, Naeem Khan, a younger educated respondent, said:

I am completely in favour of women's employment and their participation in politics not only to the level of casting votes but also contesting elections. In my mind women constitute almost half of our population which are just parasites. I think we should change these old-fashioned and rigid attitudes towards women and I see these are changing because without the contribution of women we cannot compete with other nations.

Naeem Khan, who had been to foreign countries and had liberal attitudes, further mentioned that people should change their attitudes and focus on women's education because men alone cannot meet the household responsibilities. Some of my more progressive illiterate respondents also echoed Naeem Khan's views and emphasized women's equal role in supporting the family not only in its internal matters but also in its relations to the outside world such as financial support. For instance, Sher Zaman, one of my older illiterate respondents, said:

Time has now changed and people should reject the old-fashioned traditions and thinking and open their hearts for the changing circumstances because we [men] cannot now alone meet the family and community requirements and should allow and encourage our women to participate at all levels both inside and outside responsibilities.

Sher Zaman's statement highlights a norm of the Pakhtuns, particularly prevalent in the joint family system, that one member of the family earns and the rest eats, which he said is unjust and mentioned that men should now show flexibility towards women and should give them access to the public sphere to have jobs as 'men now cannot alone meet the family requirements.' This implies that encouraging women to participate in and to share the burden of responsibilities both inside and outside of the home actually shows changing attitudes of men towards women, an important gesture for their empowerment and gaining access to (public) spaces. However, they correlated this development with an increase in the rate of education, particularly women's education, and modernization. For example, Jahnnullah, an older illiterate respondent, told me that 'once our women are educated they will also get not only employment but their other rights as well. I think before advocating for women's employment we should first encourage both men's and women's education and change attitudes of the people towards women's education'.

Sonpar and Kapur (2001: 76) in the context of south Asian societies argue that the code of manliness (*mardanagi*) prescribes that men should do the work that is particularly arduous and risky while women should act as helpers, even though women's work is very demanding too. A high commitment to gender specific gender roles can be a source of strain (ibid). For example, Ahmad (1998) while highlighting some of the men's issues in Pakistan, explains that the primary problem faced by men was the social pressure to perform according to gender-specific roles. Men experienced great pressure to prove their manhood while fulfilling their families' needs and protecting their *izat* (honour). Men felt worried about upholding their self-esteem and proving their virility among male peers. Men also thought that women's social and economic dependence on them augmented their burden. Finally, the lack

of emotional outlet and support and the taboo regarding the expression of feelings deemed to be soft and weak resulted in aggression and violence. These findings are corroborated by my data.

In Pakhtun culture violence influences the production and reproduction of the existing norms of gender spaces and role distribution. For instance, Haleem, a younger educated respondent, told me that ‘aggression plays a key role in the creation and maintenance of this rigid pattern of separate spaces and roles for women and men’. He described that ‘due to this prejudiced pattern, women are not only alienated and incarcerated at home but it also makes them inferior, powerless, dependent on men and vulnerable to violence and abuse.’ This means that women’s restriction to the domestic sphere not only isolates them socially and economically, and makes them dependent on men but also blocks their access to resources, such as the criminal justice system and severely restricts their ability to quit violent relations. Domestic violence researchers (see e.g. Dobash and Dobash 1979; 1992; Hassan 1995; Heise 1998; Karlekar ; Douki et al. 2003; Koenig et al. 2003; Khan and Hussain 2008) have argued that a strict patterns of gender boundarification restricts women and makes them vulnerable to violence.

Any fault found in the traditional role of a woman is a justified reason for her abuse, according to the majority (28 out of 32) of my respondents. For example, Ghulam, one of my older illiterate respondents, stated:

In my mind a woman usually faces domestic violence when she is careless of her husband’s desires and property, lazy and disobedient towards her husband and in-laws and is unable to fulfil her domestic responsibilities, such as cooking a tasteless meal, failing to keep the house clean and tidy and giving too little attention to the children.

A younger literate respondent, Aatif, said:

Pukhtoos cannot tolerate women's (wives') mistakes. You know it is very hard to earn money and meet the family needs in this time of inflation and tension, and when a person in such a stressful situation comes home tired and sees chaos at home, he will definitely abuse and batter his wife because she must also shoulder her responsibilities the way men do.

From my interviewees' responses it was clear that they saw domestic violence as the consequence of women's actions and of men's frustration in their daily lives. There was a sense that domestic violence was justified by certain forms of female behaviour, and by the difficulties of men's daily existence. However, there is a proverb which belittles men who abuse women without cause: *pa kor ke manzare de ao bahar gedar de* (he is a lion at home but a fox in public) which was recited by a younger literate respondent, Haleem. Another younger illiterate respondent, Sardar, described that in the public sphere it is difficult for a man to challenge others and impose his will on them because he has to face men and not women. But inside the home women and children are supposedly under his control and he has the power to do whatever he wants because no one interferes in others' family matters.

Spatialization disadvantages women more than men in Pakhtun culture. For example, one of my young literate interviewees, Sabir, mentioned how women's spaces are determined by referring to a Pakhto proverb, '*khaza da kor da* (a woman's place is home).' The majority of the Pakhtuns believe in this philosophy. It is because of this gender spatial ideology that men in Pakhtun society enjoy privileges, more freedom, and more authority and occupy more space than women. Connell's (1995: 82) assertion of the patriarchal dividend is pertinent here: 'man get a dividend from the patriarchal norm in terms of prestige, honour, dominance and the right to command'.

As agencies of redress and social services are located in the public space—being dominated by men— women face obstacles to get access to these places. State apparatuses and social institutions, which are mostly located in the public sphere, such as the law making and enforcement agencies, in general have their specific role in the production and reproduction of gender spaces. They contribute to producing gender discrimination, the subordination of women to male authority, and they encourage the perpetration of domestic violence against women (Hussain 1997; Burney 1999; Niaz 2003). These agents collectively collude in the interests of maintaining men's dominance and control over women's sexuality and behaviour (Hussain 1997: 202). Stark and Flitcraft (1995: 58) argue 'the very problems caused by social inequalities based on sex, class, race, sexual orientation, or age propel women to seek help from a system that reproduces and stabilizes those inequalities'. These inequalities include the preference for sons over daughters. I shall turn to this now.

The purdah system: a contributing factor in gender spatialization and violence against women in Pakhtun society

Purdah, meaning curtain, is a complex set of rules, practised largely in Muslim societies. It usually starts at puberty, supposedly to protect women's honour and chastity (Papanek 1973: 289; Pillai 2001: 970). It restricts a woman from interaction with stranger men called *na-moharm* (Papanek 1973: 289). For Pakhtun women, 'purdah (*satar*) is an entire system of seclusion entailing veiling and the avoidance of certain behaviour and abandoning of public exposure' (Ahmed 2006: 6). Due to the strict purdah practice, Pakhtun women take little or no part in public-sphere-related activities and are restricted to the four walls (*chardewari*) of their homes.

They cannot go out but veiled and only for serious and approved reasons (Spain 1963: 79; Weiss 1995: 118).

Predictably, almost all my respondents described purdah as one of the basic and ideal features of a Pakhtun woman and its infringement as a reason for abuse and violence. One of my older illiterate respondents, Yar Mohammad, said:

In my view the ideal Pakhtun woman is the one who stays at home and goes outside of her house only when absolutely necessary, such as going to the hospital, *gham-khadi* (sorrows and joys) or for other things, but she must be veiled and accompanied by a male or any other member of the family.

This idea was echoed by the majority of my other respondents as well, but slightly differently in the rural or tribal and urban settings. Yar Mohammad, who had a tribal background, told me that ‘women in the tribal and rural areas do not observe strict purdah, like wearing the *burqa*’ [a portable seclusion garment for women which completely covers a woman from head to toe] and can work in the fields because all people are either close relatives or have family terms and friendships with each other. But when they go outside the village or encounter a strange person they observe purdah.’ In rural/tribal areas, where people are mostly relatives and have deep dependence on each other, the domestic/private sphere is extended to the public sphere and women can go outside of their houses to work beside their men in the fields. However, women must observe strict purdah when they go outside of their domestic sphere (village) and when confronting strangers. Spain (1963: 79) has rightly described this as follows: ‘in tribal and rural areas, where the majority of people belong to one extended family, women do not observe strict purdah as such but tend to withdraw at the sight of a strange male.’

For the urban areas, for example, Nasurddin, one of my older respondents who was living in an urban area, argued that ‘people in cities are not strict regarding women’s going out into the public space.’ He told me that ‘women can go to bazaars and markets for shopping and for other necessities of the family and their own.’ Rahmat Zada, a younger educated respondent, told me that ‘women, while leaving the home, are well aware of the cultural norms and therefore use Islamic way of dress.’ He further stated that ‘women know how to protect their own and their family’s honour as they are aware of the punishment in case of violating the norms’. Sadiqi and Ennaji (2006: 92) argue that wearing the veil, in fact, provides women a greater chance of accessing the public space while remaining symbolically in the private space. It is important to note here that purdah as conceptualized in the abstract and as used in the lived experience make spaces highly blurred in Pakhtun society. This provides the opportunity for transgression by women/men.

Although purdah is differently conceived and practised in different areas and depending upon the socio-economic status of the individuals and families, it was considered one of the main factors responsible for excluding women from the public sphere, due to the cultural ideology of shame, polluting society, and the attendant threat to men’s control and authority. In South Asian societies such as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, for example, Sonpar and Kapur (2001: 74) argue that the ideology of shame, honour and pollution has a significant association with purdah. Central to this is the perception that females have loose morality as expressed in the Pakhto proverb *khaza fitna ao sharam de* (a woman is a shame and the source of enmity), repeated by Mistre Khan, a younger illiterate respondent. The chastity of a woman can easily be challenged if she moves freely outside the protected sphere of the household and without observing purdah.

Violence is normally used to make women submit to the custom of purdah. For example one of my younger educated respondents, Haleem, told me:

I think the basic purpose of strict women's purdah and violence against women in our society is to keep women under full control just for the sake of our own [men's] and family *izat* [honour].

This opinion was shared by the majority of my other interviewees. Purdah, in this sense, can be argued, works to sustain male domination of women and of the public space.

Women in Pakhtun culture also contribute to upholding patriarchal power. For example, it is women, particularly mothers, who strongly support and enforce the purdah culture for their younger female family members and admonish them for not observing it. Although Islam emphasizes men's purdah too, it has become restricted to women. Aatif, a younger literate respondent, who had religious knowledge, said: 'Islam emphasizes that men should down their gaze.' He explained that men too, in their social role, have the obligation to observe purdah through dress code and downing their gaze when they see a [strange] woman but men do not feel the need to do so. He thought that this is a form of hypocrisy.

Shaheed and Zaidi (2005: 14) argue that 'violence against women is seen as linked to the rise of conservative forces in society that aggressively and consciously act to prevent women's public appearances and participation'. Thus religious groups strongly encourage women's purdah and segregation, and often enforce it violently, particularly in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. My respondents, especially in the district Swat and Dir Upper and Dir Lower area, described that the Taliban, who still have influence in Pakhtun areas, not only have put a ban on women's public

movement but also warned women and their families of severe consequences if seen without wearing the *burqa*. Yusuf (2009) in her study notes that when a girl, Noor, with two college mates went shopping in a boutique in Karachi city, two bearded men (presumably Taliban) entered the store and abused them for wearing westernized and frivolous dress (jeans and skirt), and warned them that if they did not cover their heads and did not wear Islamic dress they would not be safe. She argues that like Noor, many women in Karachi now think of dressing conservatively because these religious militants are constantly posting warning letters to (women's) schools and colleges to adopt Islamic dress, otherwise they will face drastic consequences.

However, there is a clear contradiction among religious scholars on the specificity of certain dress codes for women. For example, Ahmad (2009) strongly condemns the imposition of the *burqa* version of purdah by certain specific sects of Islam such as the Salfi sect, the Taliban, and the Tabliqi groups and considers it an un-Islamic practice. Specific kinds of purdah not only completely segregate women but also its infringement gives the licence to be violent to women.

One of the arguments for women's exclusion from the public sphere is that it is inappropriate and unsafe for them, and that women cannot win in the public sphere, popularly expressed in the Pakhto proverb *khre ta gora ao pa sara shpe ta gora* (a she donkey cannot spend the night outside the house), mentioned by Janullah, an older illiterate respondent. This means that women are not made for the public space because of their domestication. These notions stereotype women as animals, incompetent and unable to work in the public space during certain times, particularly during night times. Women feel unsafe and afraid of public space due to

molestation, violent attacks, rape, and sexual harassment (Kelkar 2005: 4698). The 'women's fear of public places and the precautions which women take certainly construct a "spatial expression of patriarchy", reproducing traditional notions about women's roles and the "spaces" which are considered appropriate for them to use' (Pain 1997: 231).

The prevalence of the purdah system in Pakhtun culture, embedded in the cultural ideology of shame, honour and pollution, is enforced through the informal criminal justice system of the Pakhtuns called *Jirga*. This contributes to perpetuating masculine dominance and guarantees men's control of women's sexuality and behaviour, while it makes women vulnerable to violence. One might agree that the *Jirga* plays a significant role in the production of gender spatialization, gender inequality and encourages the perpetration of (domestic) violence against women. I shall now turn to this.

The Jirga system: a contributing factor of gender spatialization and the perpetration of violence against women

The Jirga (council of elders) is a conventional means of conflict resolution in Pakhtun society (Wardak 2003; Yousufzai and Gohar 2005). It is a complex institution whose operation varies at family, community, village and district level (Wardak 2003). The Jirga judicial system is a nondemocratic system because its members called *jirgamaran* are not elected but selected and as a norm consist of the senior, authoritative, and influential (male) members who make decisions by consensus. Where a Jirga deals with issues concerning women, the latter are either not asked (due to purdah) or their viewpoint is represented by close family members,

mostly the father, brother or uncle before the Jirga. This restriction of women's representation in the main local power and policy-making structure is a basic hurdle to women's empowerment in Pakhtun society. Perveen (2009: xxi) argues that 'although Jirga system is illegal in Pakistan but it still exists and dispenses justice in the name of culture despite Islam. The state has been found helpless in shutting down these victimizing 'courts' to the manifest disadvantage of women in Pakistan'. The Asian Legal Resource Centre (2009) in *Pakistan: Extra Judicial Violence and Killings of Women Ongoing in Tribal Areas* has reported more than 4000 deaths authorized by the Jirga system over the previous six years, two thirds of which were of women. Further, the report documents a particular brutal event of the honour killing of a young woman sanctioned by the local Jirga. The report notes:

In May 2008, a Jirga (an illegal tribal court), was held to 'try' a 17-year old girl after she had already been killed. As a result of the trial, she was declared as being Kari (having had an illicit relationship). This was done, according to the tribal traditions, to justify her earlier murder by members of her own family. Prior to the Jirga being held, Ms. Taslim Solangi, had been subjected to a savage ordeal. On March 7, 2008, she was made to run while being chased by a pack of dogs that bit at her legs until, exhausted, she fell to the ground where they continued to maul her. At this place, she was then shot by the father-in-law, in the presence of her father in order to intimidate him. During one inquiry, the inquiry officer found that the Jirga has documented the proceeding to justify the killing of the girl and several members have signed the document (Asian Legal Resource Centre 2009: 1).

One of the most famous brutal decisions of a Panchayat/Jirga which caught the attention of the international media and human rights activists was the gang-rape of 35-year old Mukhar Mai, in the Meer Wala village of Muzzafar Gar district in Southern Punjab in June 2002. This woman was working in her house, when the Panchayat ordered her to be raped, in order to restore the honour of the family who

brought the case, because her brother was accused of having an affair with the daughter of an influential feudal family. The government of Pakistan was forced by the Pakistani media and human rights activists to take action against the accused and the members of the Panchayat. Later the Anti Terrorist Court awarded the death sentence to the six accused (BBC News 2005; Manzoor 2005).

The Jirga system in Pakhtun society, particularly in women's issues, works in terms of customary practices. This abrogates the rights of women and normalises violence against women in order to protect the patriarchal notions of shame and honour (Niaz 2003; Baxi et al. 2006). Nearly all of my respondents in relation to the vignette of Asma and Jahangir, condemned the swara marriage decision of the Jirga and criticised Asma's father's honour killing intention (see chapter 4: 175). For instance, Omar Khan, an older illiterate respondent, said:

In my opinion the verdict of the Jirga was completely atrocious and un-Islamic because Jahangir and Asma married of their free will...but what was the guilt of Jahangir's sister... instead of swara, the Jirga should have convinced Asma's father of their rights or should have compensated him [Asma's father] by money or land or have expelled Jahangir and Asma from the village forever.

This view was echoed by my other respondents as well. Omar Khan's statement indicates that though he might have disagreed with the specific decision the Jirga took, he still considered retribution appropriate, especially for upholding the honour of men and the family. In reality it indicates the severity of punishment for women, and sometimes men as well which they face as a result of their supposed violation of the customs and marrying without the consent of their elders. However, instead of swara, there were some alternatives of retribution through which Asma's father's

honour could have been restored such as giving land, money or exiling Asma and Jahangir from the village.

26 out of 32 of my respondents considered the Jirga system unfair, biased, and a source of protecting particular men's interests. For example, Januallah, one of my older illiterate respondents, said: 'In my mind the Jirga in the majority of honour cases supports men and males' interest. The Jirga always discourages women's indulgence in activities against our norms, such as having love affairs, challenging elders' decision, modern thinking, and running away from the home because these defame the honour of one's family.' Another older illiterate respondent, Yar Mohammad, said: 'In my view the Jirga here aggravated the issue and increased domestic violence instead of mitigating it, because the life of a swara woman in our culture is very hard because she has an inferior status and she and her children face constant torment and harassment in the forms of taunts.' This view was confirmed by my other respondents.

Sar Zamin, an older educated respondent who was against the Jirga system, said: 'So far I have observed the Jirga members are biased and take the side of rich and influential parties.' He further told me that 'the Jirga has no power and force to put the culprit behind bars and mostly the (powerful) people if the decision is not in their favour they reject it, while the court imposes its decision through the police.' The credibility of the Jirga system in favouring well-off people and being unjust to poor and weak parties, particularly to women, was highlighted by the majority of my other respondents. Here the intersection of class or caste and gender becomes important since for many interviewees status was a key issue for the way in which a Jirga takes decisions.

However, despite all its faults and limitations, 27 out of 32 of my respondents thought the Jirga system to be the best available means to resolve disputes, particularly issues concerning the domestic sphere such as domestic violence against women, honour issues, and intra-family conflicts related to property or inheritance. For example, Aatif, one of my younger educated interviewees said: ‘the majority of our people dislike to involve outsiders in their personal and familial conflicts and are not in favour of reporting their private issues to courts because it is against our norm. I think Pakhtuns consider it a great shame and against their *gherat* [honour] to disclose their *kor dab* [family or private matters], particularly women’s issues to the public.’ Ibrahim, another younger educated respondent, said: ‘the public usually curse the persons and taunt those who publicise their domestic affairs.’ Faqir Mohammad, an older illiterate respondent while commenting on women’s access to or reporting of their violence to courts said: ‘Well! I think it depends on the issue, status of women, and areas. But as far as I know Pakhtuns will never let their women go to court.’

It is important to mention here that domestic violence against women (interpersonal or partner violence) was not considered a serious issue but normalized and women are either familiar with it or endure it because they have no way out. For example, Maheeb, one of my younger educated respondents, said: ‘Usually a husband’s violence to a wife such as slapping, abusing, hitting or throwing a shoe at her is a normal and common behaviour in our areas. Albeit it is taken serious when a man does some serious injury to his woman such as bone fracture, murder, etc, ordinary issues and violence to women resolve automatically because women cannot bear it for long as they are completely dependent on men. In case of severe violence the

family elders resolve it.’ This view was echoed by some of my other respondents as well.

However, some mentioned that generally courts support women’s claims and can force the family to give them their rights, particularly in terms of inheritance, divorce, and contracting a marriage of choice (as shown in the vignettes of Jahangir and Asma, and Akhtar and Nadia). Noor Ullah, a younger illiterate respondent, said: ‘However, when a woman goes for redress, the court verdicts so far as I have seen are in favour of woman.’ Yar Mohammad, an older illiterate respondent told me that ‘although courts decisions are always in favour of women but our people discourage this trend because of the fear that it will become a precedent and every woman will start demanding her rights.’ In 2010, the Peshawar High Court annulled the decision of a Jirga taken 17 years previously regarding the handing over of two sisters, Ms Basmeena and Ms Ghasiba of Buner district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, as swara to a rival family for settling a dispute. The court observed that the decision was totally against the teachings of Islam and the laws of Pakistan (Shah 2010). As indicated above however women are strongly discouraged from taking their issues to courts and even killed sometimes because it is considered a threat to men’s authority and their control of women.

Although women can get their rights through the courts, due to their mass illiteracy, ignorance of their rights, family pressure, and shame factors they tend not to make use of the courts. Women are sometimes hesitant to report violence to the authorities and the media because they feel unsafe due to the lack of any social support system in the form of a refuge or asylum centre for battered women as it exists in the west. Khan and Hussain (2008) state that women are unwilling to speak openly or seek

redress as exposure of such sensitive and private issues is seen as sully the *izzat* [honour] of the family. In other words, women have no safe space to resort to.

One major reason for the Jirga preference that I found was the bad reputation and lack of credibility of the formal criminal justice system. For example, Rahmat Zada, one of my educated respondents, said:

I would say it depends on the matter and nature of the conflict but usually Pakhtuns prefer the Jirga system because it is their traditional judicial system and through this system the conflicts are quickly resolved. The court decisions often take a long time and also need more expenses to hire an expert solicitor. Also the courts and police of our country are not reliable and corrupt and complicate the conflicts instead of solving them.

This view was echoed by some other interviewees as well. Rahmat Zada's statement is important because it highlights the reasons why the Jirga is used. First, it is a traditional system and has always endeavoured to preserve the code of the Pakhtuns (Pakhtunwali) which means protecting men's interests. In other words, the Jirga system upholds the hegemonic masculine structure of the Pakhtuns. Second, the Jirga settles disputes quickly while a court's decision takes too long, more than 40 years in certain instances, according to Nasruddin, an older educated respondent. Third, the Jirga is economical and according to Multan Shah, one of my older educated respondents, 'the Jirga members have no fee but only need some good food'. In contrast, hiring an expert solicitor needs more finances to win the case which is beyond the reach of a poor man as well as women who are entirely dependent in Pakhtun culture. Fourth, the corrupt and incompetent judiciary and executive structure of Pakistan further complicates the issue instead of resolving it.

Informal judicial systems such as the Jirga have been encouraged by the fragile state of law-enforcement, incompetent justice and police system, and the consideration of the family matters as private. Additionally, the gender-biased system and laws, for example the Hudood Ordinance, in Pakistan which provides impunity to perpetrators is also one of the basic reasons that not only stops women from seeking redress but also normalizes and encourages violence against women (see Baxi et al. 2006).

Domestic abuse is a private matter and justified in Pakhtun society

Research reveals that domestic violence against women is usually high in societies where familial and marital relations are considered by the legal forces and the community as outside of public scrutiny (see Counts et al. 1992; Heise 1998). This is particularly true in Muslim societies in general and in Pakhtun society in particular. Most of my respondents stated that domestic violence issues are highly personal and must not be exposed to the public due to shame and honour factors. They should therefore be resolved inside the family through the Jirga. For example, Noorullah, a younger illiterate respondent, said: ‘marital conflicts, domestic violence and other women’s issues at first remain unexposed to outsiders because such issues are highly personal and private and thus resolved through family elders.’

Ironically, for women, the concept of *sabar* (patience and endurance) and *kismet* (fate or destiny) which is deeply embedded in the religious teachings of Muslims is often used to rationalize and accept hardship including battering relations (Khan and Hussain 2008). The religious justifications and the importance of preserving the honour of the family lead abuser, victims, police and policy makers into a conspiracy of silence about domestic violence (Douki et al. 2003: 170). Domestic

abuse is therefore quite often hidden and regarded by many, including the victim, the police, judicial and health professionals, as private and, in some cases legitimate (Douki et al. 2003; Haj-Yahia 1998a).

In this chapter my interview data illustrated that gendered spatialization is prevalent in Pakhtun culture. That is individuals have been allocated certain places, statuses, positions, privileges, and authority and power, articulated through the Pakhtunwali code. Social spatialization in Pakhtun society is primarily shaped by gender and operates in the dichotomy of 'public' and 'domestic' spaces, supposedly designated for men and women. Further, these spaces are not mutually exclusive but interact in a complicated way which makes them highly blurred, contested, and easily trespassed, thus offering potential for violence. Gender spatialization exists in a complex way inside the supposed men's and women's spaces, influenced by the intersections of multiple factors including, for example, age, caste and profession, ethnicity, economic position, educational background, etc. of individuals. The particular ways in which spatialization operates in Pakhtun culture encourages the marginalization of women, gender discrimination, and it promotes and sustains violence, particularly domestic violence against women. In this regard, my data, for example, shows that women because of their gender have not only restricted access to spaces, authority structures, and agencies of redress but also their allocated site, 'the domestic space' by and at large is dictated by men. The practice of gender space politics in Pakhtun society is maintained through a specific gendered socialization process, the gendered division of labour, the purdah system, the jirga system, and shame and honour factors. All these have made women's spaces extremely narrow and closed. Violence, particularly violence against women, is used to reinforce this practice of gender spatiality.

CONCLUSION

The idea for undertaking this study originated in my life experience and in my professional interest as a lecturer of Sociology at the University of Malakand, Pakistan. As I indicated in the introduction, until my graduation, I lived in a Pakhtun joint family and witnessed some serious issues in this structure, for instance androcracy, asymmetrical gendered power relations, and a culture of abuse, hatred and violence, particularly violence against women (wives) and youngsters. However, despite these issues, this life gave me my identity as a Pakhtun and socialized me into adherence to the Pakhtun honour code — the celebration of machismo and upholding of *gherat*. After my graduation in Sociology I engaged in research and teaching, which enabled me to examine the related social issues more critically. I was curious to understand why Pakhtun society is so conservative, male dominated, and stereotyped (often by outsiders and insiders) as rigid, violent, and oppressive to women. Why are women and some categories of men in Pakhtun culture treated as subservient and considered secondary, thus being exposed to a high ratio of violence? Why is it that Islam, the major religion of the Pakhtuns, gives women almost equal civil rights and grants them equal access to spaces, resources and redress, but in reality their lives are otherwise?

Through this study, I have attempted to provide answers to these questions. To do this, I investigated Pakhtun men's perceptions of the socio-cultural dimensions contributing to the perpetration of domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. Although this study was carried out in three districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province its results, due to a certain homogeneity that exists in the social structure of the different communities living in Pakistan, can be extended to Pakistani society more

generally. In this concluding chapter I summarise my findings on the conditions that promote domestic violence in Pakhtun culture, and discuss their implications for policy considerations and future research.

In my introduction and background chapter (Chapter 1) I provide a description of the social structure, particularly the social construction and function of gender of Pakhtun society. Through my analysis of the available literature on Pakhtuns³⁸, I showed that Pakhtun society, based on the Pakhtun code of honour or Pakhtunwali, produces a patriarchal system of gender relations and promotes gender disparity, encouraging violence in a number of ways. Consequently, a Pakhtun man learns to be violent because of his socio-cultural environment.

One of the ways in which men's violence manifests itself is through the high prevalence of domestic violence against women, confirmed by all of my respondents. Research studies conducted in Pakistan (see e.g. Burney 1999; Shaikh 2000, 2003; Fikree et al. 2005; Minallah et al. 2009; Perveen 2009, 2010a; Andersson et al. 2010) show a high prevalence of domestic violence against women and the majority of the perpetrators are men, particularly husbands, fathers, brothers, uncles and other close relatives. My data support these findings in terms of the known perpetrators of domestic violence. The literature on masculinity and violence against women (e.g. Kersten 1996; Hearn 1998; Heise 1998; Blanchet 2001; Gadd 2002; Kordvani 2002; Watts and Zimmerman 2002; Krienert 2003; Kimmel and Aronson 2004; Flood 2009b) reveals a significant relationship between certain kinds

³⁸ See e.g. Tainter and MacGregor 2011; Minallah 2010; Khattak et al. 2009; Khan and Samina 2009; Stewart 2007; Ahmed 2006; Yousafzai and Gohar 2005; Shaheen 2004; Khan 2003; Wardak 2003; Glatzer 2002, 1998; Edwards 1996; Boesen 1980, 1983; Ahmed 1986, 1980, 1976; Lindholm 1979, 1989, 1981, 1986; Spain 1963; Barth 1959; Caroe 1958.

of masculinity and domestic violence. This is pertinent to Pakistani society in general and Pakhtun society in particular.

Domestic violence against women is an issue which is considered highly private and sensitive in Pakhtun culture. As I explained in my methodology chapter, it is impossible, particularly for a male researcher, to ask women about domestic violence because of women's segregation in Pakhtun culture. I therefore decided to interview men. Of course men too are hesitant to talk about their private lives and specifically issues concerning women. I therefore used vignettes to get information about this complex and sensitive problem. My selection of male respondents for this study was important for two other aspects. First, men being the major perpetrators of domestic violence, it was essential get to know men's views about what conditions or factors provoke them into committing violence against women. Second, available research on Pakistan (e.g. Hassan 1995; Burney 1999; Shaikh 2000, 2003; Fikree et al. 2005; Ali and Bustamante-Gavino 2007; Khan and Hussain, 2008, Naeem et al. 2008; Rabbani et al. 2008; Minallah et al. 2009; Perveen 2009, 2010a; Andersson et al. 2010) has focused on women as victims of domestic violence but very little is known about masculinity and (domestic) violence. My study begins to fill that gap and this constitutes my original contribution to the field of masculinity and domestic violence.

In the methodology chapter I also reflected upon the issues and challenges I faced during my fieldwork and discussed the strategies I adopted to counter these challenges. The major difficulty I confronted was to conduct research on a sensitive topic in a sensitive and hostile area. As the political environment of Pakistan in general and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in particular was highly unstable due to the war on terror and the Taliban insurgency in 2009, it was a difficult task to select areas

for my fieldwork and to ensure my security. However, I researched in geographical areas that I was familiar with and where I was relatively more secure, where I had the opportunity to access my respondents as well as return safely to my home or place where I was staying. In my fieldwork I initially used my family and friends in each of the selected areas to identify respondents and then used snowballing to get access to other interviewees. My simultaneous insider and outsider identity facilitated the generation of my data. For example my understanding of Pakhtun culture and speaking of Pakhto was really helpful.

I collected data from 32 male respondents in four different locations of three districts, one each in the district of Dir Upper (tehsil Dir Upper) and Dir Lower (village Chakdara), and two locations (Madina town and village Palosi) in district Peshawar, of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province. In each of the four places I selected and interviewed eight respondents on the basis of four broad categories, i.e. ethnicity, gender, age and education. The main purpose of this categorization was to see if there exist any differences in the views of my different groups of interviewees. As mentioned earlier domestic violence being a highly personal and sensitive matter in Pakhto culture, and the majority of my respondents did not talk about their personal lives and their committing of domestic violence and just talked in a general way.

I noted that the majority of my respondents showed similar views on certain issues. For example, (a) they thought Pakhtun masculinity is aggressive, revengeful, highly hierarchal, and misogynist, (b) they considered men, particularly husbands, as the potential perpetrators of domestic violence against women, (c) they favoured women's education but emphasized women's purdah, (d) they thought that domestic violence was provoked by a woman's disobedient and argumentative behaviours as

well as by complaints from the mothers-in-law in the case of joint living, (e) they considered that certain women, in particular married women as well as women with no education, living in a joint family system, with more daughters and no son, and in a polygamous marriage were more likely to face domestic violence, (f) they considered domestic violence issues as highly private and thought they should be resolved through family elders or through the Jirga system, (g) they thought Pakhtuns discriminate among children i.e. prefer sons against daughters, (h) they emphasized the specific allocation of spaces and roles for males and females, i.e., home for women and public space for men, (i) they thought that Pakhtuns rarely compromise and prefer their traditions to Islam in the context of women's issues.

However, there also emerged clear differences among my interviewees. For example, (a) most of the illiterate respondents, who in the majority of cases were also poor, preferred the joint family system, while the majority of the educated and wealthier interviewees liked to live in nuclear families. Given that joint family living was recognized as more difficult for women, they thought that domestic violence against women is perpetrated in the majority of cases by poor people and in younger years (15 to 35 years) because they are more likely to live in a joint family system, dependent, and where one has to give preference to natal bonds over conjugal bonds. In joint family structures there is also more demand to show control, often violently, over women in order to maintain the unity of the family as well as maintain one's *gherat* and manliness. (b) The educated respondents whose wives were uneducated were thought to be more likely to commit domestic violence compared to those having educated wives. (c) Illiterate respondents I noted were committing both verbal and physical violence to 'correct' a 'defiant' woman while educated respondents were either committing verbal violence or using other non-violent

means, for example boycotting or ignoring the women. (d) Some of the illiterate and rural interviewees thought women are the root cause of all evil and (family) conflicts, and said that they should be tightly controlled, while the majority of the educated respondents thought women should be treated according to Islam and not Pakhto. (e) The majority of my illiterate interviewees considered domestic violence against women as a normalized act and thought that husbands as well as in-laws are entitled to chastise the 'defiant' women, while some of the educated interviewees not only condemned this attitude but also considered it un-Islamic and a violation of the human rights. (f) The majority of the illiterate respondents had a highly conservative attitude towards women and emphasized women's purdah, disliked women's political participation and employment except for teaching and medicine which were considered the most preferable jobs for women. However, the majority of the educated respondents, specifically those living in urban areas, not only condemned the strict demand for women's purdah, but also considered it an impediment to women's empowerment. They thought that women should also do jobs other than teaching and medicine as well as cast the vote and contest elections.

The majority of the younger, specifically the educated interviewees, favoured love marriages instead of arranged marriages and emphasized that both husband and wife should be given the opportunity to select their partner, express their views, and understand each other before marriage. They criticized the autocracy of the parents in imposing their decision on children, specifically in the context of their marriage and career selection, and thought it counterproductive, resulting in domestic violence. However, few among the older respondents thought that children and women should also be involved in decision-making processes and some of the illiterate older respondents thought that parents have greater experience and can

make rational and good decisions for their kids. In a nutshell, I found that my illiterate respondents were more inclined to favour Pakhto traditions while the educated respondents were not only more flexible towards women but also more critical of Pakhto traditions and thought them not only oppressive to women but also stereotyping Pakhtuns and hampering the development of Pakhtun society.

In my analysis of the social construction of Pakhtun masculinity and domestic violence against women, I focused on the relation between ideal notions of Pakhtun masculinity and what my interviewees thought happened in reality and highlighted the association of Pakhtun masculinity with women's subordination and domestic violence against women. I also looked at the Islamic configuration of masculinity and examined the hierarchical structure of Pakhtun society and masculinity and its role in the facilitation of aggression, conflicts, and domestic violence against women.

My interview data suggested that the aggressive and misogynist masculinity that prevails in Pakhtun culture is a product of the patriarchal and tribal structure of Pakhtun society embedded in its code of conduct, the *Pakhtunwali*. The *Pakhtunwali* safeguards men's interest in almost every aspect of life and promotes and normalizes violence, particularly violence against women, in a number of ways. The construction of masculinity at the core of *Pakhtunwali* revolves round the notions such as *gherat* (self honour or self dignity), *saritoob* and *narintoob* (manliness), *badal* (revenge or vendetta) and *namus* (women's pride or honour), all of which encourage an aggressive form of masculinity. My respondents suggested that conformity to these notions was very much emphasized, admired, and enforced through community pressure.

It was because of their adherence to these particular features that the majority of my respondents thought Pakhtun people are distinct from other nations. Male identity was very much determined in line with one's level of conformity to the Pakhtun honour code (Pakhtunwali), one's link to Pakhtun genealogy, and the possession of land. This not only immensely influences the hegemony of masculinity in this culture and was used to structure 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' in Pakhtun society, but also results in the production of social hierarchies which offer the potential for violence in Pakhtun society. Women are basically ignored in the Pakhtun putative genealogical record so that this society is not only patrilineal and patriarchal in structure but the genealogical record also serves as the basis for women's long history of subordination.

My interviewees discussed the concept of masculinity often through terms such as *narrina* or *sarewalye* (men or manhood), *sare* (men), and *narintoob* or *saritoob* (manliness or manly manners). All these terms were used to either signify men or behaviours and acts associated with men or manliness. For example, 30 out of 32 of my interviewees said that *narrina* or *sare* (men) are supposed to do external and physically demanding jobs such as farming and participating in warlike and violent activities such as taking revenge while defending the honour of the family and the *watan* (country). These roles were perceived to constitute the main features of Pakhtun masculinity.

Overall, the rhetoric of Pakhtun masculinity as expressed by my interviewees was one of aggression and domination. This went together with strongly gendered, clearly defined roles for women. For example, a significant proportion of my informants indicated that women should do domestic chores, rear children, serve and

obey their husbands and in-laws, and should always submit to the authority of their elders. A woman upholding these culturally specified roles was praised by the majority of my respondents and was thought to be the ideal Pakhtun woman. However, deviation of women from their defined roles was described by many of my respondents as intolerable and leading to the perpetration of domestic violence.

Some of my interviewees thought that certain categories of women, for example educated ones and those living in urban areas and cities, or with a stable social, political and economic family background, not only had greater access to resources and jobs, enjoyed relatively more autonomy and held more power both in the public and domestic spaces but also faced less violence. In noting this, they reflected that attitudes towards women in Pakhtun society range from rigid to flexible, from oppressive to compromising and tolerant, from tribal to settled, and from exploitative to considered. However, this says little about the actual day-to-day experience women have, or about the violence they experience. What it indicates is that women as a whole live in subordination because power and authority and its means such as the ownership of land and property, the Hujra, the Jirga, the mosque, and the majority of the executive positions, business and trade, are largely in the control of males in Pakhtun society.

There was little dissent among my interviewees regarding the ideal of masculinity that Pakhtun culture represents. This was evident in their attitudes towards women. Since women (*kaza* or *zan*) are a symbol of men's *gherat* (*namus*) in Pakhtun culture they are thought also to be a potential threat to that honour and the family. They were also thought to be a source of conflicts and evil in Pakhtun Society (Barth 1959; Ahmed 1980; Boesen 1983; Ahmed 2000; Wardak 2003; Taj 2004). Therefore

my interviewees argued that it is necessary to keep them under tight control and that they must be subjugated and segregated so that they do not jeopardise men's honour. Some feared women's independence and empowerment as a threat to their dominant position and honour. That position provides men with the licence to beat, abuse and even to kill women in the name of honour (Minallah 2010). This attitude of using violence as a mechanism to resolve domestic and matrimonial issues prevailed among the men I interviewed.

My respondents thought that Pakhtunwali and Islam in the main reinforced each other, particularly in the context of the gendered division of labour, the domination of males over females, respect for elders, women's purdah etc. That is the practice of the one meant the practice of the other. One respondent, Farooq, said: 'Islam is the second name of Pakhto and vice versa and a Pakhtun must practise both'. However, some of my respondents, particularly the educated ones, mentioned a discrepancy between the ideals of Islam and Pakhto and men's actual behaviour. For example, some of my respondents pointed out that although Islam promotes brotherhood, disapproves of violence, discourages gender inequality and racism, emphasizes the civil rights of women and discourages domestic violence against women, Pakhtun people, they thought, acted in contradiction of this and preferred their traditions. Because of this contradiction to Islam in Pakhtun traditions and the latter's incompatibility with modern trends, their promotion of conservatism and violence in society, particularly violence against women and their killing in the name of honour, the 'doing of Pakhto' was viewed and equated by some of my interviewees with the 'doing of *jehal* and *zad*' (ignorance and rigidity). One respondent even described the 'doing of Pakhto' as half madness (*Pakhto nem kufar de*). However, others justified this contradiction by reference to *riwaj* (Pakhtun

customs); community pressure and taunts (*peghor*) such as being called *begharat* (dishonoured); ignorance of Islamic knowledge; and the selective and masculinist interpretation of Islam.

My research showed that Pakhtun masculine structure is not monolithic but highly variegated. It operates through a complex system derived from mainly three different but interlocking sources, namely men's genealogy and ethnicity, their caste and occupation, and their age and birth position in the family. These, I noted, create multiple opportunities for status differentiation and thus created many opportunities for status violation. This in turn produces violence and conflicts, and results in the perpetration of domestic violence against women. For example, 21 out of 32 of my respondents described, in relation to the vignette of Jahangir's and Asma's marriage (see Appendix III), that family and ethnic background and the social status of people must be considered before establishing matrimonial and other relationships. My interviewees indicated that Pakhtuns prefer to establish (matrimonial) relations with equals and people of noble and respectable castes/occupations such as the Syuids, Sahabzadas, Mians, Akhunzada, etc and feel it shameful to give their daughters in marriage to men of lower castes/occupations. This is indicative of the strongly hierarchical attitudes Pakhtuns have. My informants understood that in case of any violation, as shown in the case of Asma's and Jehangir's marriage, the consequences can be drastic and lead to family disputes and honour killing of both the woman and man. However, some of my respondents mentioned that these trends are changing as Pakhtuns are becoming more Muslim as well as through the modernization of the professions and through changes in wealth and knowledge.

My data revealed the complex and at times contradictory structure of Pakhtun hegemonic masculinity. The majority of my respondents had a strong sense that

certain categories of men were more likely to commit violence than others. As already mentioned, 25 out of 32 of my interviewees thought that illiterate and poor men were more likely to commit both physical and verbal violence against women compared to rich and educated men who were thought to be more judicious and able to tackle domestic issues through non-violent ways. At the same time, violence against women was taken for granted and whenever it happened it was supposed to be provoked by the woman's (disobedient) actions. Men never thought that men were to blame for the violence they committed or that they committed violence without provocation. They thus refused responsibility on the part of men for their actions which at the same time they saw as legitimated by the honour code men adhered to. Men's violence was justified as a necessity to guard their reputation and standing in the community. Symbols of power and domination such as the size of one's moustache were highly valued. Some of my respondents thought that educated women might face less violence compared to illiterate women. The available literature in the South Asian countries also supports this (Karlekar 1998; Koenig et al. 1998; Khan and Hussain 2008; Rabbani et al. 2008; Naeem et al. 2008).

In my second analysis chapter (Chapter 4), I examined the family structure, marriage patterns, and other practices pertinent to Pakhtun families in encouraging the perpetration of domestic violence against women. My interview data indicated a complex configuration of the Pakhtun family structure. All families are (supposed to be) headed by a (senior) male. The joint or extended family is the dominant family system in Pakhtun culture; the majority of my respondents were living in this family system. Poverty, to gain and maintain influence in the community, and control by the family elders were mentioned by my interviewees as the main reasons for joint living. In a context where there is no state welfare provision and a lack of a fair

criminal justice system, the family becomes the main source of support and security. When economic opportunities are few, relying on others in the family is one way to escape destitution. It was in this sense that the collective natal (family) interest was considered more important than individual interests.

My research shows a relationship in men's perception between particular Pakhtun family structures and domestic violence. 25 out of 32 of my respondents considered the joint family system as a precipitating factor in promoting domestic violence and wife abuse. A number of reasons were cited for the higher rate of domestic violence in joint families. First, where several wives of different men cohabit in the joint family structure, they tend to be prone to infighting. Women are generally perceived to be a potential threat to the unity of the joint family and therefore require to be controlled, in the majority of the cases through physical violence. Pakhtun men, particularly in the joint family structure, are expected to be strict with their wives and not to tolerate women's arguments and disobedience towards them and their natal family. If they do, they face scolding and being labelled hen-pecked husbands, which threatens their '*Pakhtunness*' and '*gherat* (honour)'— the basic features of Pakhtun hegemonic masculinity. Men's violence to women here is a conscious and learnt act (Watts and Zimmerman 2002; Hearn 1998), used for the subordination and regulation of women supposedly in the collective interest of the joint family.

Second, in this family system preference is given to natal bonds rather than conjugal ties because blood relations are considered permanent while conjugal relations are thought important. Women occupy the bottom of the social hierarchy in the Pakhtun joint family system. They are widely perceived as outsiders in relation to natal members. Women are expected to serve their in-laws besides showing servitude to the husband. Pakhtun attitudes have been influenced by Islamic beliefs which

emphasize respect for parents and assure great bounty, paradise for example, for servitude towards parents and upholding natal ties. Given this situation, one of my illiterate interviewee argued: ‘it is commonly said in our culture that a wife can be changed but not the natal family members’.

Third, the prevalence of domestic violence against women was thought to be higher in the joint families because it provides the opportunities for more people (husbands as well as in-laws) to abuse and beat a woman than a nuclear family. All my respondents, in relation to their response to the brother-in-law’s violence to Nadia (see Appendix III), saw (brothers)-in-laws as potential perpetrators of domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. Some of the illiterate respondents even thought it a right of both the husband and (brothers)-in-laws to be violent in order to subjugate insubordinate women. In contrast, the educated respondents not only disagreed with the husband’s supposedly entitlement to be violent but also thought violence from the (brothers)-in-laws was unacceptable and un-Islamic. Overall, however, there was a sense that violence against women was taken for granted, despite some of my interviewees knowing that it was contrary to Islamic laws. Some associated the brothers-in-law’s violence with weakness on the part of the victim’s husband which might be due to his economic and social dependency on his brothers or his junior position in the family.

Fourth, my research highlighted the role of the family elders, both patriarchs and matriarchs, as important in either promoting or mitigating the perpetration of domestic violence. Contrary to the role of the father in controlling violence in the domestic sphere, the mother-in-law was thought to provoke the perpetration of domestic violence against her daughters-in-law. One reason for the mothers-in-law’s provoking domestic violence was the notion of *sas be kabi baho te* (the mother-in-

law was once the daughter-in-law) in Pakistani society. That violence inflicted by the mothers-in-law against the daughters-in-law reflects the abuse and injustice once suffered by the mothers-in-law (Faery and Noor 2004; Ali and Bustamante-Gavino 2007; Khan and Hussain 2008).

Some of my older respondents who had experience of joint living criticized joint living not only in terms of women's exploitation but for many other reasons. Some respondents considered it a hotbed of conflicts and thought it leads to hatred, intra-family conflicts, and enmity and litigation among the brothers' children (*tarboorwali*) regarding the distribution of common property after the disintegration of the joint family. My interviewees indicated that in Pakhtun culture intra-familial conflicts and agnatic rivalries continue to be prevented or settled, normally by the Jirga judicial system, through interfamily or *badal* (exchanged) marriages as well as through *swara* marriages. Such marriages in the majority of the cases are arranged without the consent of the women and therefore make the life of the swara and exchanged women hell because they have low status and are often treated violently, both physically and psychologically (Minallah 2003; Usafzai 2005; Ebrahim 2006).

My interviewees also recognized that the customs and traditions pertaining to marriage are highly oppressive to women and contribute to domestic violence. Pakhtun marriages continue to be largely arranged by parents and at an early age for both boys and girls. Since Pakhtun marriages are largely patrilocal, it is through the marriage contract that the ownership of a woman is transferred from her parents to her husband and in-laws. All my respondents thought married women face, and are more vulnerable to, domestic violence compared to unmarried women.

I asked my respondents what types of marriages make women vulnerable to domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. Both endogamous and exogamous marriages were seen as potential sources of domestic violence. Some of my interviewees thought that a quick adjustment for exogamously married women, called ‘outsider’ women, to the new family and its domestic environment was difficult and that such women are more likely to face violence. However, my data showed that women were also vulnerable to violence in endogamous marriages because family marriages were thought less expensive and more easily contracted than exogamous marriages, and that women in endogamous relations, due to the shared family honour and respect for permanent ties, have zero chances of walking away from a battering relationship.

Much is expected of women marrying into a family. The possibilities of domestic violence being inflicted on a woman in Pakhtun culture relates, by and large, to her assumption of her subordinate position in the family. Her submission and servitude towards the husband and in-laws is key to her survival in that family. Words such as ‘obedience’ that outside the traditional marriage vows are not used much in western cultures to describe conjugal relations, are completely normalized in this culture, sealing women’s subordinate position.

My study demonstrates that the prevalence of a marriage custom called *newaka* (booking) not only undermines the autonomy of both men and women but also facilitates domestic violence against women. It happens mostly in the joint/extended families or among close friends. My vignette of Ayaz and Jamila (see Appendix III), showed that a violation of this verbal agreement can lead to family conflicts, revenge (*badal*), and honour killing. However, all my interviewees condemned the custom of ‘booking’ and thought it against Sharia.

Some of my respondents mentioned that sometimes the husband contracts another marriage when he does not like/love his wife and is not satisfied with the decision of his parents. They also mentioned that women sometimes commit suicide when the decision is forced on them or when they have no means of walking away. The literature reports that early and enforced marriages result in complex health problems for women and make them vulnerable to domestic violence and that they can also be a reason for suicide (Blanchet 2001; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Umemoto 2001; Koenig et al. 2003).

My research findings show that domestic violence against women is thought to be lower when there is a mutual understanding and affection between the husband and wife before or after the marriage. However, I noted that such marriages are very rare because first, it is difficult, particularly for women, to establish love with a man and marry without the consent of family elders. Second, in my respondents' views marriages are largely based on compromise and do not involve love, and therefore their success was thought a matter of luck, depending upon the beauty and servitude of the woman towards her husband and in-laws. However, in Pakhtun culture there is often a deviation from parental authority in the form of love, elopement and court marriages. The majority of my respondents, in relation to their response to the vignette of Asma's and Jahangir's love marriage, thought love marriages acceptable and in accordance with the law and Sharia, but against Pakhtun traditions. In Pakhtun culture the elopement of a woman is shameful (Marsden 2007). It threatens the honour (*gherat*) of the family, and one way to restore the damaged honour and respect in the community is to either kill the couple or demand a *swara* (giving of women in marriage as compensation) as did the father of Asma in my vignette. The majority of my respondents not only condemned these practices and attitude but also

thought them un-Islamic and harmful. However, they mentioned that a Pakhtun cannot compromise his honour and abandon his traditions. Some of my respondents said that the government takes strong action against those involved in promoting the custom of swara and honour killing but these practices still largely prevail because of deeply entrenched traditions and the limited influence of the state (Perveen 2009).

My respondents thought that polygamy, as permitted by Islam but under certain conditions, makes women vulnerable to violence in Pakhtun culture. They stated that women living in polygamous relationships face more domestic violence than women living in monogamous relations. They explained that usually a husband in a polygamous marriage takes more care of his younger wife and ignores his older wife's and her children's interests. This they thought often promotes a culture of hatred, conflict, and nagging among the wives and to establish order in the family the husband commits violence. However, only five percent of men in Pakistan are involved in polygamy (Hayat 2006). My respondents mentioned different reasons for having multiple marriages such as trying to have a male child, the infertility of the first wife, arranged marriages, and sexual dissatisfaction with the first wife. But some of my interviewees revealed that often men, particularly those who are influential and rich, practise polygamy for sexual reasons and it is considered a symbol of hegemonic masculinity. Studies have reported the adverse affects of polygamy not only in deteriorating the lives of women, but also contributing to the aggressive personality of the children (Niaz 2003; Shurtleff and Goddard 2005; Vermaat 2009).

My interview data confirmed that certain practices pertaining to Pakistani marriages such as dowry and dower (*Jaheez*) are thought to make a significant contribution to the promotion of violence against women, known as 'dowry violence' or 'dowry

deaths' (Sharma 2008). Some of my older respondents mentioned the burden of dowry as one of the reasons why daughters are not preferred in Pakhtun culture. The burden of the dowry was one of the reasons why a woman with more daughters than sons was thought by some of my respondents to face more violence compared to a woman with one or more sons. The harmful practice of dowry results in others problems as well. For example, in order to avoid the dowry and to marry off their daughters people often practise *badal* (exchange marriages) which can lead to exchange violence and family feuds, according to some of my respondents. One reason for female infanticide and female feticide in South Asian cultures is the dowry custom (Karlekar 1998; Jacoby and Mansuri 2010; Shah 2010). Similarly, literature has shown a significant relationship between dowry and domestic violence against women (Bates et al. 1992; Karlekar 1999; Terzieff 2004; Sarfaraz 2008).

Another harmful practice that prevails in the Pakhtun family is the denial of women's inheritance right, confirmed by 26 out of 32 of my respondents. My interviewees mentioned that although Islam, besides other rights, also emphasizes this right for women, even religious people, they said, seldom give their women a share in property and land. Since land is a source of power, and as it constitutes the *gherat* (honour) of the Pakhtuns (Barth 1959), its fragmentation can be a threat to the hegemony and influence of a Pakhtun. It was in this sense that my respondents said that women are pressurized by their natal family to gift their share of the land to their male siblings, otherwise they can lose the support of their brothers. At the same time women can also face domestic violence from in-laws and the husband if they are unable to get their share in their father's property (Saeed-ur-Rahman 2010). Studies in South Asian societies have reported that women's share in and holding of property not only influences their socio-economic status and makes them

independent and empowered but also minimizes their vulnerability to violence (Kabeer 2001; Koenig et al. 2003: 279; Fikree et al. 2005: 51; Mumtaz 2007).

Pakhtun culture is a long way away from promoting this.

In the last analysis chapter of this thesis (Chapter 5), I explored space and the issue of domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. I focused on how social spaces in Pakhtun society are constructed, distributed, contested, negotiated and intersect with gender, age, class, caste and ethnicity.

Pakhtun society maintains a particular system of gender spatialization, entrenched in the behavioural code of the Pakhtuns, through which certain spaces are allocated to individuals, assigned according to their gender, age, role obligations, and levels of authority and power. The public space (*olase zai*) was recognized as the men's space. In contrast, the domestic space was considered women's space. It was seen as restricted to the four walls of the house (*chardewari*), and subordinated, by and large, to the public or men's space. My interviewees suggested that it is hard for women to deviate from this culturally approved pattern of gender spatiality and if they do they face violence.

However, I found that spatialization exists not only in the dichotomy of 'public' and 'private' spaces, supposedly designated for men and women, but it also exists in a complex manner inside these spaces. I analysed this complexity through Crenshaw's (1991) concept of 'intersectionality'. Thus I found that space in Pakhtun culture intersects with social factors such as gender, age, caste or occupation, economic, political, and religious status. It produces social spaces and categories and on the basis of these social hierarchies emerge, access to space is granted, and (domestic) violence perpetuated. Access to and the use of spaces in Pakhtun culture is largely

influenced by gender and by the notions of *mashar-kashar* (seniorhood-juniorhood—age structure). Senior men and women, usually the patriarch and matriarch, enjoy greater access to space and hold more authority than the junior men and women. However, different categories of men have different access to public space and positions of authority. For instance, usually a person gets greater access to space and public authority as he ages but older men of respectable families and castes, men who are economically strong and have more power and influence in the community, have greater access to authority structures, such as the Jirga council, public offices compared to low caste and younger men.

Women lack access to the public sphere and are the most disadvantaged group because of their gender. As a consequence they are also vulnerable to violence because on the one hand they are economically and socially dependent on men while on the other hand their limited access to public space because of their fear and threat of male violence (Pain 1997; Valentine 1989) and because of purdah and the associated shame factor (Papanek 1973), means they have no access to redress and to the space where violence may be adjudicated on.

Space, masculinity, and domestic violence interact in a complex way in Pakhtun culture. For example, some of my respondents thought that usually subordinate men, because of their junior age, different ethnicity, lower class or caste positions and social status, find it hard to stand up to the authority and exploitation of powerful and senior men both in the public and domestic sphere. This can lead to a conflicted position in relation to their masculinity and mounting frustration and violent attitudes. Consequently, these subordinate men exercise a more zealous control of the women, often through the use of violence, in order to retain their masculine vigour and to ‘compensate their status quo’ (Sonpar and Kapur 2001: 76). This

means violence is reproduced and follows a certain pattern in this culture which cascades from the powerful to the subordinate, i.e. the violence inflicted by powerful men on subordinate men is often reproduced by these subordinate men on wives.

My study reflects that women's work and roles are devalued in Pakhtun culture; some of my interviewees thought women's work was inferior compared to men's responsibilities and work. It was in this sense that the majority of my respondents showed a preference for sons and connected males directly to power and wealth—both of which by implication are denied to women in Pakhtun culture. Girls were thought a liability for the family and face discrimination in terms of food allocation, health services, education, inheritance etc.

My research reveals that gender-space segregations in Pakhtun culture is more complex than the private/public divide suggests. They interact in a dynamic way, so that one does not exist without the other. Some of my respondents mentioned that women may access public spaces, for example, the street, the market place for shopping, agricultural fields in rural areas, and working as doctors, nurses, teachers etc. Similarly, men may also enter women's spaces, for instance, the kitchen, and may perform tasks culturally assigned to women, such as child care, cooking, etc. However, the practices, according to which they use each other's places and exchange responsibilities, are highly prescriptive and differentiated according to age, class and location. Some of my interviewees said that men generally abstain from entering feminine spaces because of the taboo of being called a *Khazonak* (effeminate). In the same way women too cannot occupy the public sphere like men do. Rather, they do their business and move to their allocated space, the home. Public space was thought a 'dangerous space' for women where they could face

molestation and become vulnerable to male violence and sexual assault. It was for this reason that some of my respondents argued that women should stay at home. Koskela (1999: 111) argues that ‘male violence or threat of male violence creates a space from which women are excluded on account of their gender’. Koskela’s notions perfectly reflect women’s spatial positioning in Pakhtun society.

Some of my educated and illiterate respondents condemned the strict patterns of gender spatialization and segregated roles and thought this attitude old-fashioned. They urged women’s equal participation in all sectors and considered it necessary to national development. However, in reality this view seemed to me an illusion because (a) men, due to the prevalent gender order, are still authoritarian in their relations to women, (b) women’s space and role is still very narrow because of the strict practice of women’s purdah, and the shame and honour factors in Pakhtun culture. Therefore, men in Pakhtun culture being cast as the protectors, earners, financiers and providers of the family continue to dictate the terms of both the public and domestic women’s sphere.

All my respondents, for example, emphasized women’s purdah and recognized it as one of the key features of a Pakhtun woman. Through the purdah practice women are expected to display modesty and to withdraw from some of the public spaces to which they had access as children (Mensch et al. 2003: 10; Papanek 1973). The essence of purdah practice was the perception that a woman’s chastity can easily be challenged if she moves freely and without proper purdah outside the protected areas of the house, and thus she was thought likely to bring shame to the family. These views of women continue to dominate.

However, I observed that purdah as conceptualized in the abstract and as used in lived experience makes spaces highly blurred in Pakhtun society. For instance, purdah is differently conceived and practised depending upon the area (rural and urban) and socio-economic status of individuals and families. Aatif, one of my respondents pointed out that Islam also emphasizes men's purdah but it has become restricted to women, which he thought very hypocritical and biased. However, violence or the threat of violence is used, not only from family members but also from the Islamic militant group (Taliban), to make women submit to the custom of a specific kind of purdah system (*the burqa*) in Pakhtun society. The purdah system thus offered some licence to be violent to women if they violate it.

In the last part of this analysis chapter, I discussed that the informal judicial system of the Pakhtuns called *Jirga* plays a significant role in sustaining gender-space politics, gender inequality, and the perpetration of domestic violence against women. I noted that the Jirga system, particularly in women's issues, works in terms of Pakhtun traditions and therefore endeavours to preserve men's interests.

However, despite all its faults and limitations, 27 out of 32 of my respondents thought the Jirga system to be the best available means to resolve disputes, particularly related to women.

Women cannot participate in jirgas and it is therefore not easily possible for them to use this system. Some of my respondents mentioned that generally courts supported women's claims and can force a family to give them their rights, particularly in terms of inheritance, divorce, and marriage of choice. However, they indicated that women are strongly discouraged from taking their issues to courts and even killed sometimes because of the honour and shame factors.

Overall, this thesis examined Pakhtun men's perceptions of the conditions promoting domestic violence in Pakhtun culture. Some of these were: the social edifice of Pakhtun society which is based on a masculine code of conduct, the *Pakhtunwali*, as the root cause of promoting structural gender inequality, aggression, male dominance over women through the notions of *gherat* (self honour and dignity) and *namus* (women's pride), and legitimizing domestic violence against women in the defence of males' honour; the mass illiteracy and the poverty of Pakhtuns; selective and masculinist interpretations of Islamic injunctions; asymmetrical power and authority structures in terms of age and gender; the Pakhtun joint family system; the preference for natal relations over conjugal ones; the preference for sons over daughters; the (assumed) infertility of women and giving birth to more daughters; the marriage customs of Pakhtuns; denial of property and inheritance rights to women; specific allocation of spaces and roles for women and men; women's segregation through *purdah*; the gender-biased criminal justice system, the *Jirga*; the social and economic dependency of women on men; the privatization of domestic and women's issues; and a lack of state support for battered women, e.g. lack of domestic violence laws and shelter homes.

The implications of all this are that there is no single, short-cut, and permanent solution to the problem of domestic violence against women in Pakistani society in general and Pakhtun culture in particular. Instead, given the recognition of precipitating factors that instigate the perpetration of domestic violence, a multipronged strategy of comprehensive measures is required to alleviate this. This suggests that:

1. At government level, legislation should be established to declare domestic and other familial violence a criminal act and not a private issue.
2. Existing laws in the form of the Hudood Ordinance (1979) which confer considerable impunity to the perpetrators of domestic violence and are therefore oppressive to women should be withdrawn.
3. Measures should be taken in the form of building shelters, refuges, providing legal aid, counselling, and medical services at district level to support women victims of domestic violence.
4. The formal criminal justice system i.e. the police, judges, and investigative agencies should not operate in a gender-biased manner but should function as a credible source of redress for women victims of violence.
5. Strict measures should be taken against the informal criminal justice system, and the people involved in such bodies encouraging gender biased traditions should be prosecuted.
6. The media in Pakistan are very powerful and can play a significant role in projecting the consequences of rigid attitudes towards women concerning their education, political rights, marriage consent, employment, participation in the household decisions etc. The media should also be encouraged to highlight the impact/cost of domestic violence at individual and society level, and should expose cases of domestic violence as it did in the case of Mukhtara Mai (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13163169>).
7. Through non-governmental organizations, social mobilization and awareness programmes should be initiated at community level by involving community elders, youths, and women regarding the rights and involvement of women in decision-making and income-generation processes.

8. Measures should be taken to educate men about the negative effects of domestic violence and to teach them other forms of conflict resolution.
9. Women's education can play a key role not only in the eradication of domestic violence issue but also more widely. In this regard the government's initiative of raising the female literacy ratio by providing them with free books, scholarships, and other incentives is commendable. However, a much stronger campaign is needed to make people aware of the importance of female education. Strict measures should be taken against parents, for example, who stop their daughters from attending school as well as against the religious groups who destroy girls' schools and spread negative rumours about women's education and empowerment.

The above mentioned measures if implemented would contribute to women's empowerment, gender equality, and tackling the issue of domestic violence in Pakistan.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Participants' Profile

Younger Illiterate	Name	Age	Location	Marital status	Family Type	Profession
A1	Omar Khan	25	Palosi	Married	Joint	Shop keeper
A2	Noor Ullah	26	Dir Upper	Unmarried	Joint	Policeman
A3	Nadar	28	Madina Town	Married	Nuclear	Daily wager
A4	Waris Khan	31	Madina Town	Unmarried	Joint	Daily wager
A5	Misthre Khan	32	Chakdara	Married	Joint	Gardner
A6	Watan	33	Chakdara	Married	Nuclear	Cook
A7	Sardar	33	Palosi	Married	Joint	Unemployed
A8	Gul Mohammad	34	Dir Upper	Married	Joint	Daily wager
Old Illiterate						
B1	Gul Amin	37	Madina Town	Married	Joint	Waiter
B2	Janullah	41	Chakdara	Married	Nuclear	Working overseas
B3	Faqir Mohammad	43	Palosi	Married	Joint	Unemployed
B4	Rasool Khan	44	Madina Town	Married	Joint	Mason
B5	Khush Dil Khan	47	Chakdara	Married	Joint	Peon
B6	Ghulam	48	Dir Upper	Married	Nuclear	Own business
B7	Yar Mohammad	50	Dir Upper	Married	Joint	Unemployed
B8	Sher Zaman	37	Palosi	Married	Nuclear	Shopkeeper

Younger Literate	Name	Age	Location	Educational level	Marital status	Family Type	Profession
C1	Ibrahim	24	Palosi	FA	Married	Joint	Medical store
C2	Aatif	26	Dir Upper	FA	Married	Joint	Teacher
C3	Naeem	31	Palosi	BA	Married	Joint	Business
C4	Maheeb	32	Dir Upper	SSC	Married	Nuclear	Shopkeeper
C5	Haleem	32	Madina Town	BSc	Married	Joint	Medical rape
C6	Hamid	33	Chakdara	MA	Married	Nuclear	Social worker/teacher
C7	Rahmat Zada	33	Madina Town	FA	Married	Joint	Business
C8	Sabir	34	Chakdara	MA	Married	Nuclear	Teacher
Older Literate							
D1	Naeem	38	Dir Upper	FA	Married	Nuclear	Shopkeeper
D2	Altaf	39	Palosi	BA	Married	Nuclear	School teacher
D3	Sarzamin	42	Dir Upper	FA	Married	Nuclear	Counsellor
D4	Ghafar	43	Chakdara	BA	Married	Nuclear	Nurse
D5	Farooq	44	Madina Town	BA	Married	Nuclear	Superintendent
D6	Zia ur Rahman	45	Palosi	MA	Married	Joint	Sports teacher
D7	Nasruddin	48	Madina Town	BA	Married	Nuclear	Medical store
D8	Multan Shah	50	Chakdara	SSC	Married	Nuclear	Security guard

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Respondent's Profile

Name-----

Age-----

Type of Residence (i) Rural (ii) Urban

Educational Status-----

A. Perception about Pakhtun masculinity/femininity and domestic violence.

1. In your opinion what are the features of a (perfect) Pakhtun man and woman? (basic features e.g. physical and socio-cultural concepts of masculinity and femininity)?
2. How do you conceive of the status and role of men and women in Pakhtun society?
3. How do you think of the gender relations (power) and behaviours in the domestic and public spheres?
4. How do Pakhtun men treat women in their routine relations?
5. When and why do men resort to domestic violence against women?
6. What kind of violence (physical, economic, social, psychological) do men usually commit against women and why?

B. The Pakhtun family system and the issue of domestic violence

1. In what type of family system do you live? Or What type of family structure do you like? (i) Joint family (ii) Nuclear family
2. If joint, please state why?
3. If nuclear, please state why?
4. What type of children do you prefer?
i) Sons ii) Daughters

5. If sons why?
6. If daughters why?
7. What type of women do you think are more vulnerable to domestic violence and why?
 - i) Married.
 - ii) Unmarried
 - iii) Educated
 - iv) Uneducated
 - v) Married to close relatives
 - vi) Married to non-relatives
 - vii) Women having more sons
 - viii) Women having more daughters
 - ix) Women with no children
 - x) Women living in a polygamous marriage
8. At what age in your opinion are men more aggressive and commit domestic violence against women and why?
9. In your opinion which member in the joint family system has a more provocative role in the perpetration of domestic violence against women and why?
 - i) Father ii) Brothers iii) Husband iv) Brothers-in-law
 - v) Father-in-law vi) Mother-in-law vii) Daughters-in-law
10. How do male and other members of the family react if a woman challenges men's authority in -----?

C. Religion, Pakhtuns, and domestic violence

1. In your opinion what do the Qur'an and Hadith say about the status and role of men and women in the society?
2. In your opinion what do the Qur'an and Hadith say about the treatment and relationship of men and women in the family and community?
3. In your opinion what do the Qur'an and Hadith say about domestic violence against women?
4. What do Qur'an and Hadith say if a woman?

5. Do you think Pakhtuns precisely follow religion in terms of women's issues and rights?
6. If no why?

D. The relationship of the economy and education to domestic violence

1. What do you think of women's participation in the employment sector?
2. Is there any relationship between the economic conditions of either man or woman and domestic violence and why?
3. What do you think about women's and men's education?
4. Is there any relationship between education and the perpetration of domestic violence against women and why?

E. The political and judicial systems and domestic violence

1. What do you think about women's political participation?
2. If they should participate, please tell me why and in what way?
3. If not, why?
4. Does women's political empowerment have any impact on women's status and role?
5. How do people in your area deal/settle cases of domestic violence against women? (Do they take their issues to court or solve them through the Jirga?)
6. How do government institutions, for instance polices, courts and establishment deal with domestic violence cases?
7. What should men/women do to avoid domestic violence?

Appendix III: Vignettes

A. Asma and Jahangir's love marriage.

In village [A, B, C] Asma eloped with Jahangir and later on contracted a court marriage. Before their elopement Jahangir proposed to Asma twice by sending his parents but Asma's father rejected them on the grounds of Jahangir's different ethnicity and low status in the community. Despite his low social background Asma loved Jahangir. After their elopement Asma's father tried to kill both Asma and Jahangir in the name of honour but the village *Jirga* resolved the issue by giving one of Jahangir's sisters as *swara* [a custom in Pakhtoon society in which the opponent is compensated with a woman to settle a dispute] to marry the already married brother of Asma. Now Asma and Jahangir's sister face constant abuse and violence as well as low status in the eyes of the in-laws and community.

- Q. 1. What do you think about the court marriage decision of Jahangir and Asma?
- Q. 2. In your opinion, why are the ethnicity or social position of people so important in establishing [matrimonial] relationships in Pakhtun culture?
- Q. 3. What do you think about the honour killing intention of Asma's father?
- Q. 4. What do you think about the *swara* decision of the Jirga?
- Q. 5. In your opinion how should the in-laws of Jahangir's sister and Asma behave to them?
- Q. 6. What do you think about the role of the police and the courts in these matters?

B. Ayaz's and Jamila's verbal marriage (*nivaka*)

The parents of Jamila and Ayaz made a verbal commitment to their children's marriage when the children were below five. After twenty years Jamila completed her education and was appointed as a lecturer in a government college while Ayaz became a taxi driver. Ayaz's parents sent a proposal to remind Jamila's parents of

their promise and also to fix the date for the marriage but Jamila refused because she was not happy with her father's decision. One day Ayaz tried to abduct Jamila when she was on her way back home from college but failed. A severe hostility started between the two families after this incident. After a long struggle to get Jamila, Ayaz finally got married to another girl in the village. When someone proposed to Jamila, Ayaz and his family threatened both the family of Jamila and those who proposed to her. Jamila is still unmarried and faces this torment.

- Q. 1. In your opinion, should parents be entitled to choose or decide about their children's life choices?
- Q. 2. What do you think about Jamila's position in this event?
- Q. 3. What do you think about Ayaz's claim of Jamila's ownership?

C. Brothers-in-Laws' violence to Nadia

Akhtar and Nadia dissolved their marriage after a two-year court trial. Akhtar's parents were not satisfied with Nadia's behaviour, her liberal and arrogant attitudes. Nadia being the daughter of a rich businessman and qualified was not happy with the joint family structure and wanted her own house and independence. Akhtar preferred his family and was not willing to meet her demands. Nadia also accused Akhtar and her brother-in-law of violence and harassment.

- Q. 1. In your opinion what kind of behaviour should Nadia have with her in-laws and vice versa?
- Q. 2. What do you think about Nadia's demands?
- Q. 3. What do you think about the domestic violence from Akhtar and his brothers towards Nadia in this event?

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